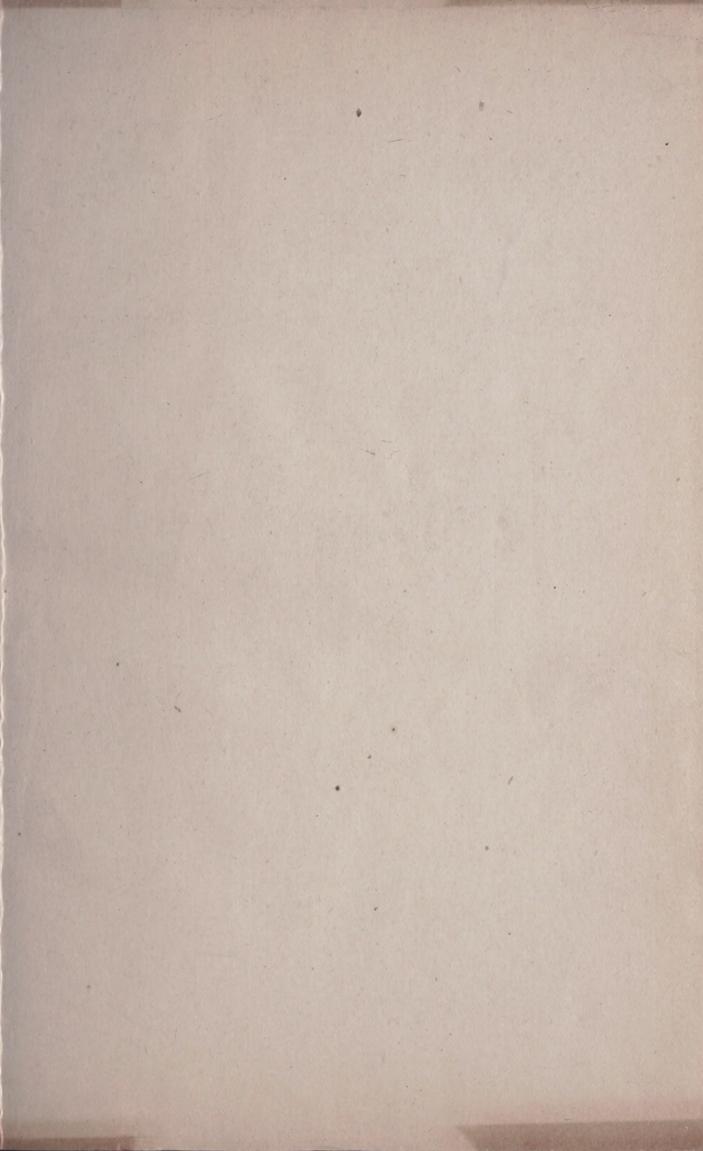
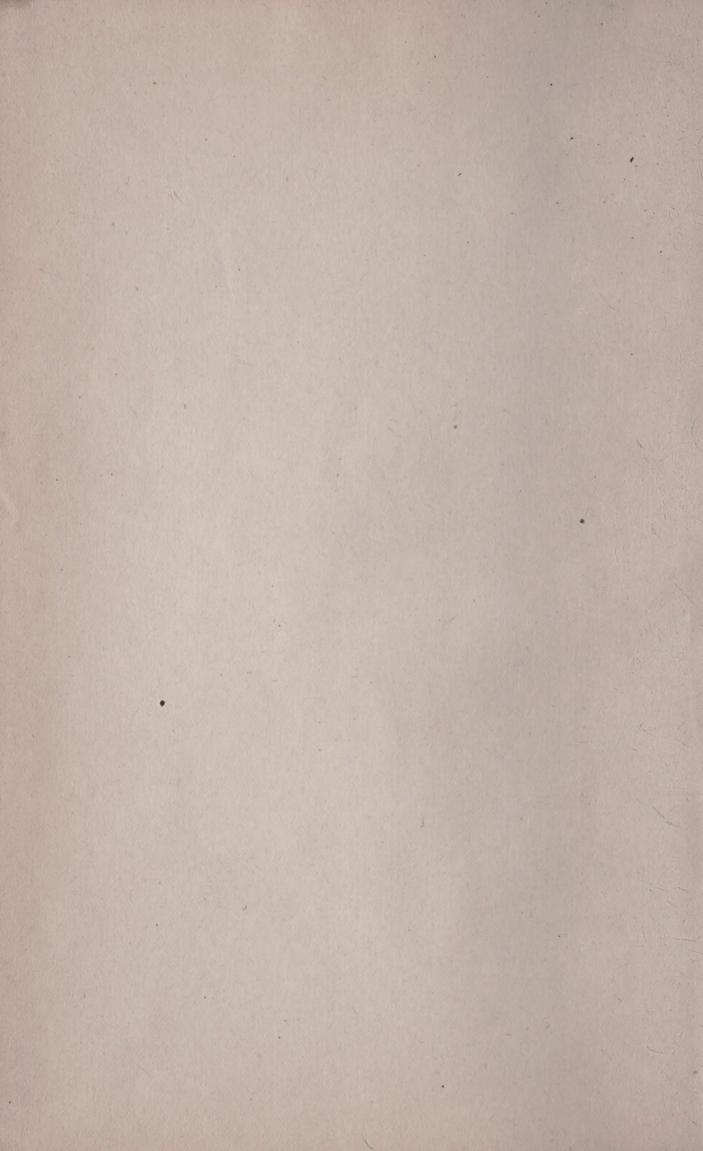


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## SPURIOUS.

#### CHAPTER FIRST.

Located in the highland districts of Naples, near the sub-Apennine valleys, so famous in Italy for their floral charms, was the Castle Lavini, a magnificent time-honored structure surrounded by dense thickets on the outskirts of the property, yet beautifully situated upon a slight elevation of ground on the banks of the river Tibez, a small tributary of the Po. This old stone mansion, with its massive towers and mossy walls, had been in the hands of the Lavini family over a century, and on account of its spacious dimensions and attractive surroundings, as well as its nearness to Naples, had always been a popular rendezvous for the society people of Naples and surrounding Italy.

The occupants of this castle of domes, Signor and Madame Lavini, together with one daughter, Marie Lavini, who was a dashing brunette of fifteen summers, were cosily seated in one of the niches of an upper balcony, their feet lazily resting upon the heavy, low stone balustrade which extended around the mansion. Hanging over their heads, as if to shelter them from the storms that were to come, drooped the great leafy boughs of the cypress that almost completely surrounded the mansion. It was a calm June evening, when all nature poured forth its leafy beauty and

rich perfume. The luxuriant gardens and sparkling fountains below, the gold-edged leaves, painted by the rays of the setting sun, the evening song of birds, and the soft moaning of the summer breezes hushed all in silence.

Signor Lavini sat smoking his meerschaum pipe, and all three seemed to be in deep thought, when Marie asked if the arrangements for the grand soirée at the mansion were completed, or at least if the night of the party had been agreed upon. Signor Lavini replied in the affirmative, and calling his daughter to his side, fondled her dark brown hair and kissed her sweet forehead over and over again, at the same time telling her, in detail, the arrangements for the approaching soirée, which was to commemorate the one hundred and tenth anniversary of Castle Lavini, and was to be a grand affair in every particular. Dancing platforms had been erected in the open conservatories, and preparations for music and a large attendance had been made.

Invitations to all living members of the Lavini family were issued, as well as to many prominent people of society in Naples.

After a lengthy description of all preliminaries, Signor Lavini despatched his daughter to the butler's pantry, to know if all was in readiness in the caterer's department, with a request that she should return promptly, as her mother and himself desired to have a few moments of private conversation with her.

Marie, full of wonderment, danced gayly down the long stone corridor to the rear staircase, where she was met by the old family nurse, Annine, who was perpetually full of desire to do something for the "pet of the houshold," and who at once placed herself completely in the service of her young mistress, Marie,

"Annine, I'm so happy to-day, thinking of the grand party to be given in my honor, that I can hardly contain myself. Just one week from to-day the event takes place, and I shall enter society in earnest. Oh, Annine, I could fly with joy! No more pokish books, and early hours of retirement, but the mazy dance, the gay, gay world. I shall see it now in all its grand reality, and the dreams of my childhood shall be realized."

Annine said nothing, but great tears, as big as rain-drops, hung loosely between her eyelids. How well she knew the reality of that dream of childhood, even in her humble station of life! She too had sipped the dews of childhood's happy anticipations, and lived to find them "false as dicers' oaths," full of emptiness, great baubles that glitter and shine, and in another second forever disappear. As Annine turned, taking one corner of her apron to wipe the tears from her eyes, Marie passed down the stairway and delivered her instructions to the butler, after which she hurriedly returned to her father's side.

Signor Lavini arose, presented one arm to his daughter, the other to Madame Lavini, and all three passed through the large casement leading into the main corridor, from thence into the parlor, where all were seated.

Marie, sitting at her father's feet, with upturned face heard from his lips words that would have shielded her from many of the cares of this world had she but heeded the kindly warning.

Again and again he kissed the upturned face of his darling child, and looked into those soft black eyes, that reflected so much purity of soul and simplicity of thought and purpose. "Oh, my blessed child," he cried with emotion, "would to God I could live long enough in this world to keep the thorns and stubble from those little feet and guide them safely to the other shore, where all is rest!" Marie looked wonderingly at him. Madame Lavini was completely overcome by her husband's words, but, kneeling beside her daughter, placed both hands upon her silken hair, and said, "God bless you, my child, God bless you! May the words your father has spoken guide and comfort you through life!"

Marie kissed her parents and retired to her chamber, where she knelt at her bedside and prayed a long and fervent prayer that God would protect her from all evil influences, and that her dear parents might be spared for many years to come. She finally threw herself upon the bed in deep meditation, and all kinds of reflections passed through her mind.

Her father's dear kind words, so soft and gentle, admonished her above all other things to cherish and preserve her childlike innocence and purity. Filled with wonderment and vague impressions of the future, she fell asleep, and was aroused by the bright rays of the morning sun falling over her face.

After Marie retired that night, Signor and Madame Lavini decided to purchase for their daughter a magnificent trousseau, that her first appearance in society might be entirely satisfactory. They therefore concluded to go to Naples on the following day, taking with them their daughter, to remain in the city a few days, that her modiste might have the benefit of her presence in preparing her wardrobe for the coming event. So, early on the next morning, all departed for Naples.

The few days in Naples were uneventful. Signor Lavini

and his family returned entirely satisfied with the result of their visit.

As the following Wednesday evening was the night fixed upon for the party, everything was in confusion. The mansion was to be crashed from end to end; the servants were busily engaged rearranging the furniture, sweeping, dusting, arranging statuary, and preparing for floral decorations. The large crystal chandeliers had been thoroughly cleaned, and looked like clusters of sparkling diamonds; the reception-room and three massive parlors had been thrown into one large room, which displayed statuary, unique and otherwise, in profusion. Festoons of cypress twigs were artistically arranged from chandelier to chandelier, uniting room with room; small wreaths of moss ferns, in the midst of which were bouquets of flowers in endless variety, hung from the candelabra. The whole was a grand spectacle to look upon.

Wednesday came, and a perfect day it was. The sun shone out in all its splendor, the air was filled with rich perfumes, and the birds sang as if in rivalry with each other; the lawns and shrubbery were trimmed and looked like velvet, the fountains prattled as if in merriment, and the little, frisky squirrels hopped from tree to tree in restless sport with each other.

Marie arose that morning with a heart full of hope and happiness. Attired in her new morning wrap, she placed herself before the mirror of the dressing-case, and was indeed astonished to see how womanly she appeared.

Her long, dark, wavy hair fell loosely over her shoulders; her slender figure and majestic style would captivate any lover of the beautiful, and it was not without a little selfconsciousness on her own part that she had been given at

least her share of bodily adornment. In fact, it was the first time in all her life she had reflected upon the subject with anything more than casual thought, but now she really believed herself more than ordinarily handsome. After again taking a hasty look at her appearance, she closed the door of the dressing-case and tapped the bell. Annine was despatched to the sleeping-apartment of Signor and Madame Lavini, to know at what hour she might breakfast with them. Annine returned with the answer that they were now in readiness, and that the breakfast meal was waiting to be served. Marie made a somewhat hurried toilet and joined her parents in the breakfast-room. As Marie entered, Signor Lavini dropped his morning paper, and arising, extended both hands to meet those of his daughter; at the same moment Madame Lavini, who was standing beside the half-open window, picked a rose that hung through the grating, and walking towards her daughter gave her a "good-morning" kiss, and placed the rose in her hair. Signor Lavini arranged chairs for Madame Lavini and his daughter at the table, and the meal was served.

As Signor Lavini sat looking at his daughter his soul was filled with pride, yet intermingled with fear. He read in her bright flashing eyes an impulsive, confiding nature, full of passionate love, but with a strong inherited desire to be venturesome.

This trait of character she had displayed throughout her childhood. She would jump a little farther, swing a little higher, and walk a little closer to the water's edge than her companions, seemingly anxious to gain that notoriety subsequent upon such hazardous feats.

This element in her character alarmed her father; full

well he knew how dangerous such a nature adorned with a beautiful face and figure might be, and it was this that prompted him to give his daughter the benefit of a few words in private.

The conversation at the breakfast-table was regarding the party in the evening, when Signor Lavini interrupted by saying that, as it was a beautiful day, he would very much enjoy the company of the ladies in a boating expedition down the river.

Marie was on her feet in a moment, and Madame Lavini, who was in exceedingly delicate health, at first hesitated, but finally sanctioned the going. Soon all arrangements were made, and the party, including Signor and Madame Lavini and Marie, also Phil Aggi, the stableman, to act as oarsman, were straggling along down the pebbly roadway to the boat-house, where the outriggers were in readiness, oars in lockers, velvet cushions on seats, minnow-pails and fishing-tackle in profusion.

The ladies were seated comfortably, Phil at the oars, when Signor Lavini lighted a cigar, seated himself in the bow, and pushed the boat from the dockage. It was a perfect fishing day, and all were preparing tackle to fish, when Signor Lavini spied another boat in one of the eddies on the river, and thought it would be a capital idea to exchange greetings with the other party.

Phil was consequently directed to pull in the direction of the other boat, and to the surprise and amazement of all it was discovered to be the boat of his old-time military friend, General Alexander Pachi, and his family, including his son, William Pachi, who had just graduated with high honors from the military academy at Milan. Young Pachi had in former years been the schoolmate and companion

of Marie, and between them a strong childish affection had existed; it had, however, been some years since they had met, and the embarrassment of such a meeting had flushed the cheeks of Marie; her face was aglow with beauty, and in an instant all the gush of childhood's impulses, added to those of riper years, flooded the two young hearts.

After a cordial shaking of hands and friendly greetings, Signor Lavini announced that there was to be a grand anniversary soirée, as well as his daughter's début into society, at the castle that evening, and insisted upon the presence of the General and his family.

The General seemed delighted at the opportunity, and hasty arrangements were made by them to return to Naples and prepare for the event.

As the dinner-hour was approaching it was decided to return to the boat-house at once; consequently the boat was headed for Lavini Castle.

Madame Lavini and her daughter were engaged in conversation regarding the young lieutenant, while Signor Lavini was planning in his mind what a desirable partner for life the young lieutenant would be for his charming daughter, and then and there firmly resolved to do all in his power to bring about the desired result.

Previous to their leaving General Pachi and his family, the General had kindly proffered his influence in securing the regimental band at the quarters, as well as all military equipage service from the government corral, to be in attendance in due time, and directed his son, the lieutenant, to see that his wishes were carried out.

Upon the arrival home of Signor Lavini and family, dinner was served, and the afternoon used in preparing for the party. Annine was in general demand, first arranging

the toilet of Madame Lavini and then flying to answer the tappings of Marie's bell. Finally all were in full dress, and the hour of eight was announced by the old stone clock on the landing of the main staircase.

Marie summoned Annine to know if the servants were in their places, and while waiting at the stairway for an answer to her inquiry the door-bell sounded, and the voices of people in gay, animated conversation could be heard in the ante-rooms.

Marie, while in Naples, had arranged with two of her old school-friends to assist in receiving and introducing the guests, and was wondering why they had not arrived, when the door-bell sounded and their names were announced. Marie tripped gayly down the front stairway and was confronted by two young ladies, Mademoiselle Inez Ferretti and Mademoiselle Enona Griffa, both daughters of marine officers, accomplished and handsome. Signor and Madame Lavini followed down the stairway and were introduced to the young ladies, when all returned to the large ante-room to receive guests.

Soon the announcement of arrivals began, and in a short time the reception-rooms were well filled.

Marie had breathlessly awaited the arrival of General Pachi and his family, when suddenly there appeared in the door of the reception-room a tall handsome man, with dark complexion and flashing black eyes, in company with a lady somewhat younger in years, yet whose face required no close scrutiny to find signs of sorrow and disappointment.

Inez, who stood close to Marie, exclaimed with surprise and animation, though in a low tone, "As sure as you live, there's Prof. Meonta Garcia and his poor unhappy wife! Gossip has it that they are decidedly unhappy—two incompatible temperaments, I suppose."

Just then Madame Garcia put out her hand, which was cordially met by that of Signor Lavini, who introduced her to Madame Lavini, also their daughter Marie, and so on through the reception-room, followed by her husband, Prof. Garcia, who was also cordially received by Signor and Madame Lavini and introduced to Marie.

As the Professor took the hand of the beautiful girl, he involuntarily pressed it in his own, and stood as one semiconscious; his brain seemed paralyzed as he gazed into those deep, dark eyes and upon the majestic and stately form of the young lady before him. Never before in all his life had his dream of ideal womanhood been realized; but suddenly discovering his awkward position, he bowed low and passed on to the parlors, where Madame Garcia was impatiently awaiting his coming.

The music in the conservatory was now plainly audible in the mansion, and couples were strolling to and fro between the great cypress trees; others were seated in large manilla hammocks, swinging backward and forward in the summer breezes. All nature was awake, and presented to the eye a mantle of velvet green, studded here and there with colored lights that looked like jewels.

The air was pregnant with rich odors from the lilac and the locusts, and all combined in presenting nature in its most enchanting form.

While the Professor and Madame Garcia were gazing upon the scenes below, Marie was still in the reception-room receiving the guests. To have saved her life, she could not remove from her mind the face of Prof. Garcia. He was so strikingly handsome, and so perfect and polished in

his manners, that, notwithstanding the little prick of conscience (which said to her she must not for a moment listen to his compliments, nor entertain anything but casual friendship for him), there was no denying the fact that her anxiety to receive the family of General Pachi had considerably abated; but Signor Lavini insisted that his family should remain in the ante-room until his friend the General had arrived.

"Papa," said Marie, "it must be that some unexpected occurrence prevents the coming of General Pachi and family to-night; it is very tiresome sitting here in state, awaiting their arrival, yet I suppose we must remain. I do wish they might come, however."

Signor Lavini's eyes flashed with delight when he saw the anxious expression of his daughter's face, believing that Marie was already quite infatuated with the young lieutenant and impatient for his arrival; but had he known that her anxiety was to hurry to the parlor to look once more upon the face of the handsome Professor, his expression of satisfaction would doubtless have changed to that of a graver character.

Signor Lavini in a somewhat lengthy way explained the delay in the arrival of General Pachi by stating that it was a late hour in which they received their invitation, and that due allowance should be made for their tardiness in arriving, stating further that he had no anxiety whatever about their final coming. The General, he said, was his old-time friend, and had been in India during the time of his son's absence in military training. Their arrival in Naples had been announced in the morning papers, but had been overlooked by him; otherwise their invitation should have been issued with all the others.

The coming of the young lieutenant was looked forward to by all the ladies present as quite an item in the success of the event; in fact it had been generally whispered about that Lieutenant Pachi, a dashing young military officer, was to be present; and all the ladies, married and unmarried, were delighted at the prospect of so valuable an acquisition to their social circles. It had also been generally noised about among the gentlemen present that Mademoiselle Marie Lavini, the accomplished, beautiful daughter and only child of Signor and Madame Lavini (who was to inherit an enormous fortune at her parents' death) was to make her appearance for the first time in society circles.

It was but a short time before General Pachi arrived, and as the young lieutenant entered the reception-room all eyes were upon him. His tall handsome figure, buttoned closely in uniform apparel, was striking indeed; his face was not handsome, but frank and honest beyond question, and reflected his nature perfectly.

After a cordial hand-shaking with all but Mademoiselle Marie, he stepped gracefully before her, and taking her hand daintily in his own, said: "Mademoiselle Marie, I am delighted with this meeting; it is unexpected joy, I assure you. I am still more delighted to learn that you have entered society; may I have the extreme pleasure of your company in the first waltz to-night? I shall so appreciate the distinction, though I know my position will be envied by many here; yet for old acquaintance' sake I beg this privilege, and hope you are not engaged."

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure, Lieutenant Pachi," said Marie, "than to grant your request; besides, I feel very much flattered that I should have been selected as the partner of one so much in demand as yourself."

Lieutenant Pachi thanked her for the compliment, and, instead of passing through the reception-room into the parlor, stepped noiselessly out under the large piazza and seated himself in an easy-chair, quite alone, at least too much occupied with the experiences of the last few moments to know or care who observed his going.

Drawing a cigarette from his case he lighted it, and closed his eyes that nothing might distract him from the vision he most wished to see. Never in his life had he been so enamoured, so completely infatuated, as by the beautiful face of Marie. Over and over again he wondered if she had discovered with what degree of admiration he had gazed upon her, and if his language had betrayed his infatuation.

Prof. Garcia, though unobserved by his wife, had witnessed the whole spectacle. Not for a moment had he taken his eyes from the beautiful creature who had so completely absorbed his every thought. Ostensibly looking out upon the scenes about him, and from time to time commenting upon the beauty of this or the sweetness of that, his mind was in another sphere entirely, and he had so arranged his chair by the window that nothing obscured his view of Mademoiselle Marie.

No sooner had he placed his eyes upon her, than he was resolved that she should be an actress in the drama of his treacherous schemes. To accomplish his devilish design was the study of his mind. He must at least gain her favor (not knowing that he already possessed it), and arrange for Madame Garcia to extend an invitation to Marie to visit them in Naples.

Madame Garcia, who was in blissful ignorance of all these

goings-on, sat silently meditating upon the mistakes she had made in life. She had married against her mother's wishes, and directly in opposition to those of her friends. The fickleness of Prof. Garcia had been discovered and was well known to those who were intimate with him; but his large black eyes and noble forehead bespoke for him an honest nature and even disposition that he did not possess. The man who truly loves his wife confides in her; and even though at times he thrusts little petty annoyances upon her mind unnecessarily, she loves to help him carry the many crosses life so wantonly imposes upon us all.

Prof. Garcia, on the contrary, never made a confidant of his wife; in fact he married her because he expected the contract that made them one would furnish him in future with a luxuriant living and plenty of money. Yet like many other such enterprises this had "vanished into thin air," and Madame Garcia found herself married to a man who was not only devoid of principle, but designing in purpose and deceitful in practice. His business transactions were unscrupulous, and in many little ways Madame Garcia discovered that he had no thought or interest in common with her own. Gradually she found herself losing respect for him; her advice was received in anger, and hastily and indiscreetly answered. But little did she dream that as he sat beside her he had in his possession correspondence from his old friend and schoolmate, Prof. Marion Wood, in London, secretly arranging his departure to England, and the abandonment forever of herself and her little baby boy.

#### CHAPTER SECOND.

LIEUTENANT PACHI, who had lost himself in reverie, was arranging in his own mind the quickest, safest, and most effective way of winning the love and admiration of one so wondrously fair as Mademoiselle Marie. All kinds of schemes passed through his mind. He was aware that a large fortune was at his disposal, and was also conscious that his position in military life would be instrumental in obtaining the desired end; but, feeling and knowing within himself that his personal appearance was not of a prepossessing character, a doubt arose in his mind as to the possibility of success. Thus debating the pros and cons, he was suddenly awakened from this dreamy state by hearing the music in the conservatory, and jumping hastily to his feet, drew his watch from his pocket, and was shocked to find that it was a half-hour past the time announced by the programme for the waltz in honor of Mademoiselle Marie's debut.

Lieutenant Pachi, remembering his engagement with Mademoiselle Marie for this waltz in particular, proceeded with haste to the conservatory, and as he stepped through the leafy doorway his eyes rested upon a spectacle that pained him beyond description. Mademoiselle Marie, who had evidently waited until her position seemed awkward, had at last accepted the polite invitation of Prof. Garcia, who, with Madame Garcia, was seated beside Signor and Madame Lavini, and had overheard a conversation to the effect that Lieutenant Pachi had asked, as a special compliment, that he might join Marie in the waltz in her honor.

The orchestra was now playing the music dedicated to her, and, much to the astonishment and chagrin of her friends and herself, Lieutenant Pachi had failed to put in an appearance. Signor and Madame Lavini were in the midst of great confusion and embarrassment, answering, or at least trying to answer, questions from numerous friends and acquaintances as to what prevented Mademoiselle Marie from participating in the waltz so carefully arranged and beautifully rendered for her. Then Prof. Garcia arose, unceremoniously excused himself to Madame Garcia, his wife, and stepping before Mademoiselle Marie, politely asked the pleasure of a waltz with her, stating that he should be delighted with the privilege of substituting himself for Lieutenant Pachi. As Mademoiselle Marie looked upon the face of the handsome Professor a thrill passed through her. There was a something that seemed to take possession of her very nature, and suddenly, without further reflection, she answered in the affirmative, never thinking how ridiculous her position would be, no reflection as to the fact that Prof. Garcia was a married man, and that his place was by the side of his young wife.

Like most young people whose perceptive faculties have not been duly aroused by misrepresentation and gossip, Mademoiselle Marie was either blissfully ignorant of the censure and misjudgment that would surely follow her actions, or possibly somewhat indifferent as to the ultimatum of it all; at any rate, she glided off with the Professor down the long shining platform, by the orchestra, backward and forward from fountain to fountain, till at last, overcome by the heat and prostrated by excessive dancing, she and the Professor seated themselves at the extreme end of the platform under a group of large palm-leaves that arched

gracefully overhead and dipped their dainty tips into the fountain before them.

In the mean time, Lieutenant Pachi, greatly embarrassed at his clumsy position, sought, first, Mademoiselle Marie, but not succeeding in finding her, approached Signor Lavini, and with all true candor and honesty explained his absence, and charged it all to his own stupidity.

The music, which had stopped for a time, had just begun another waltz, when Signor Lavini spied Madame Garcia sitting alone by the doorway of the conservatory, and taking the arm of the lieutenant, crossed the platform and introduced him to the wife of the Professor. Madame Garcia was not brilliant in feature, but she was bright, and accomplished in art and music. Upon seeing the lieutenant in company with Signor Lavini coming in the direction of where she was seated, she had anticipated the introduction, and picking a bright yellow rose that stole through the lattice, carelessly arranged it in her bosom. Who can imagine the sufferings of a woman with a highly sensitive nature and confiding heart, whose very soul is wrapped up in the man to whom she gave her life, her nature, her all, and despite all her powers, her prayers and petitions to God that it might be different, finds herself losing that respect which, under all circumstances, precedes true love for the man who is now her husband, and, more than all, the father of her offspring?

As Madame Garcia had just received another cruel blow from her faithless husband,—in fact, before her very eyes he had grossly insulted her, in leaving her alone, unattended and unaccompanied, while he participated in the waltz with Mademoiselle Marie,—it was her intention, at first, to pass out of the conservatory, if possible, unobserved, order the equipage, and return to her home. It seemed as if her heart would break, and she longed for the solitude of her own chamber, where she could give vent to her pent-up emotions.

It was this that had occasioned Madame Garcia to seat herself so near the doorway; but appreciating the amount of furor and embarrassment such an action would produce, she decided to make the best of her so dejected condition, and assume if possible a look of indifference and contentment. As the lieutenant approached her with an invitation to waltz, she reflectively said: "I do not think I will;" but, suddenly regaining herself, said: "Yes, thanks, with much pleasure," and joined the lieutenant.

SignorLavini had, during this introduction, been looking eagerly for his daughter's reappearance with the Professor, and not seeing her, had become quite uneasy as to her whereabouts, when suddenly, resounding with terrific force, came the clear, piercing shriek of a woman from the extreme end of the conservatory. All eyes were turned in the direction of the sound; everything was confusion and uproar; guests rushing backward and forward and trying to glean something of what had happened. Signor Lavini came pushing his way excitedly through the crowded conservatory, asking in every direction if his daughter had been injured. Meeting General Pachi, the General informed him that nothing serious had happened, only that Madame Garcia had, in the midst of the excessive heat, become prostrated and fainted, and that his son, the lieutenant, had carefully attended to her wants until the arrival of the Professor, her husband, and that, in accordance with the request of Prof. Garcia, he had directed his carriage to be immediately brought to the door of the

conservatory, that he might return home at once with Madame Garcia, and give her that special care and attention her condition so emphatically demanded.

The Professor's tardiness in arriving at the scene was commented upon by all present, and his comparative indifference as to the occurrence seemed strange beyond question.

Upon the arrival of the Professor, however, it was ascertained from him that Madame Garcia was subject to attacks of this kind, and, though not really dangerous, invariably left her in a very prostrate condition. Imagine if you can the feelings of the Professor when Madame Garcia rolled her deep, dark eyes upon him, which said plainer than words could speak: "You villain, you shall pay dearly for your treachery."

The carriage came, and soon Prof. and Madame Garcia were on their way home. Not a word was spoken until they reached Naples, when the Professor, in a guilty way, said: "My darling wife, I cannot understand your sudden illness to-night; something unusual for you, was it not?"

"Yes, quite so, my darling husband," answered Madame Garcia. These words were spoken in a sarcastic tone, and followed by others of a more sarcastic nature.

Suddenly the carriage arrived at the curbstone, stopped, and Madame Garcia alighted, without the assistance of the Professor, and ran hastily up the stairway, where she was met by Matilda, her maid, with an expression of surprise at the early hour of her arrival home, and by still greater surprise at the ghastly expression of her face. Seizing both her hands, Matilda cried out in despair:

"Oh, Madame, Madame, what on earth has happened?

Has there been an accident, or have you been taken suddenly ill at the party?"

"That's it, Matilda," answered Madame Garcia. "Is my room in readiness. If so, kindly assist me up the stairway. I feel so faint and sick."

At this moment the Professor entered the hallway and, boisterously pushing Matilda aside, was about to take the arm of his wife, when Madame Garcia, turning abruptly, refused his assistance, and with an almost superhuman effort rushed up the stairway to her chamber, and opening the door, she threw herself upon the bed completely exhausted.

The Professor followed his wife up the stairway, and entering her chamber, angrily and loudly exclaimed: "Madame, I desire an explanation of your conduct; your actions surpass all precedents."

"And you shall have it, Professor Garcia," answered Madame Garcia, with emphasis, raising her head from the pillow and loosening her wraps. "You shall have it, I say, and to your heart's content. My explanation is that in the midst of a party given by Signor and Madame Lavini in honor of their daughter's entrance into society, I saw you, with my two eyes, this night, my husband, my darling husband, embracing his new-found sweets in the seclusion so carefully arranged by him, yet so poorly protected from intruding eyes that his darling wife saw it. Oh, God! that I might have been spared this last, most cruel blow of all!"

"Impossible, Madame, impossible," answered the Professor. "Your eyes have grossly deceived you. I was, at the time of your sudden illness, enjoying the flavor of a cheroot with Lieutenant Pachi—some that his father

brought from India. We were talking over old times in Naples. I knew young Pachi when but a lad; in fact, I was but small myself; yet well I do remember one little circumstance that occurred in childhood—

"Why, my darling wife, what makes you look so pale? Are you suffering again?"

"Yes," answered Madame Garcia, "suffering, oh, suffering more than I would if all the stones in Christendom were piled upon my back. I say, Garcia, come hither, kneel beside me; I have a question to ask you of vital importance to me, and as you would consider the request of a dying friend, one that has been tried and true to you, answer me truthfully: Were you not in company to-night with Mademoiselle Marie Lavini and at the time of my sudden illness did you not hold her firmly in your embrace, and kiss her lips again and again?"

The face of the Professor had flushed to crimson before Madame Garcia had finished her question, and quickly arising, he said:

"Do you still disbelieve me? Did I not answer your question, and produce an unmistakable evidence that your eyes must have deceived you?"

"Yes," answered Madame Garcia, "your evidence is unmistakable, and confirms beyond a question of a doubt that, not my eyes, but my husband deceived me. O Garcia, do not, I beseech you, couple the name of Lieutenant Pachi with your base designs and evil purpose; for to this young man I owe my life, for his tender care and gentle manner at the time when publicly and designedly you practised your artful deceits, and sunk the wife of your bosom and the mother of your child in the mire of embarrassment and humiliation, saved me from injury

and restored me to consciousness. Bieutenant Pachi was the partner of your wife in the waltz that made such timely music for your sweet employment; and now to your secret pleasures and falsities you add misrepresentation in saying that you were in company with Lieutenant Pachi during the waltz, when that gentleman was by my side during the entire waltz and at the moment my brain reeled and I fell unconscious to the floor. My eyes did not deceive me as you say, Signor. Would to God they had! that I might have been spared that cruel spectacle. But a cruel fate is a legacy I have inherited from my poor father, whose life was an uninterrupted series of shot and Though quite young when my dear father left this world, I have a keen remembrance of the smile upon his face. The messenger of death that came to bear him away to another and better world was the most welcome guest he ever entertained. And so with me. Signor, I tnink, even now, I see my father's hand beckoning me homeward; yes, and heard his gentle voice softly calling, 'Come, come, my unhappy child, into thy Father's home, where "troubles cease forever and the weary are at rest.""

As Madame Garcia finished speaking she sank back upon the pillow, buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly.

The Professor, dumbfounded at the knowledge she possessed of his doings, and seeing clearly now that the cause of her sudden illness was that she had discovered him in company with Mademoiselle Marie beside the fountain where he had supposed himself securely hidden from any and all intrusion, and appreciating that in trying to cover his exploits he had still further given Madame Garcia reason to disbelieve his statements by falsely representing that he was in the company of the young lieutenant, could

see no way left for him but to still further persist in the claim that he was not in company with Mademoiselle Marie at the time mentioned; and quick as a flash the thought passed through his mind that he should insist upon Mademoiselle Marie confirming his statements; and being cognizant that unless some evidence of his innocence was brought to light, his plans of having a visit from Mademoiselle Marie (as the guest of his wife) would be foiled, and seeing the necessity, above all things, that there should be no rupture of friendship between Mademoiselle Marie and his wife at this time, he desired to disabuse his wife's mind of what she really saw, and bring about, if possible, an amicable feeling amongst them all.

During these reflections the Professor had been standing with his hand upon the door-knob, and his eyes riveted to the floor. He then walked slowly across the room, and, resting himself upon the side of the bed beside his wife, he took one of her hands in his, and said:

"My dear wife, do you remember a passage in Scripture that says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'? If so, I do beseech you that, as you have loved and suffered for me, you will reserve your decision and reconsider your conclusion as to what you saw this night. That I have denied them seems not sufficient to satisfy your mind. Will you let me prove to you that I am innocent of the charges so cruelly preferred against me?"

Before he had finished his sentence, Madame Garcia had risen from the bed and, taking both her husband's hands in her own, said:

"Oh, Signor, Signor, can it be that it was the imaginations of a jealous mind that so impressed me? But if so, answer me, why did you leave me alone, unattended and embarrassed, in the very first waltz to-night? It was certainly my right to expect your company at this time at least, and yet you left me for that bewitching creature. Oh, Signor, can you answer this? Why did you say you were in the company of Lieutenant Pachi at the time I fell senseless to the floor, when Lieutenant Pachi was my partner and by my side?"

"My dear wife," interposed the Professor, seeing too many facts staring him in the face, "you are too exacting altogether to be fair. That I was with Lieutenant Pachi I can prove; whether it was at the exact time of your unfortunate accident I really could not be positive; but kindly allow me the privilege of meeting Mademoiselle Marie in your presence, that you may question her as to the truth of your impressions. Invite her to visit you for a few days in Naples, and you shall have overwhelming and abundant proof that your impressions were purely the imaginations of your own mind. And as regards my dancing with Mademoiselle Marie, could you not see the awkward position that stupid lieutenant had left her in? There was the music in her honor, especially dedicated to her, being rendered, and lieutenant Pachi, who had taken so much trouble and pains to secure the first waltz with Mademoiselle Marie, was not to be found. Inquiries were passing about freely as to why Mademoiselle Marie did not participate in the waltz composed for her, and to relieve her of this embarrassed position I asked that I might substitute myself in his stead; was that something so shocking, my dear? And now, really, do you not think your husband was justified in all that he has done? Your good sense, my darling wife, should teach you not to hastily misjudge one who has never in the whole course of his married life given you the slightest cause for jealousy; and, had I known that your disposition was of this character, I assure you I should have taken extra precautions not to have given you so much pain, believe me, dear wife. Come, now, kiss your old foolish husband, and dry your eyes forever against such ridiculous forebodings and follies."

"Signor," said Madame Garcia, "you will forgive me, won't you, for so cruelly misjudging you? I feel more ashamed than you know to have so thoroughly paraded the vilest part of my whole nature—jealousy. But oh, Signor, I do so worship your every movement, that when I saw those little attentions which you have always so carefully and thoughtfully bestowed upon me lavished upon another, I was beside myself with jealousy; and while in this state of mind it was not strange that I should have imagined anything—was it, my precious husband? You do love me, don't you? and say you will forgive me what I have done this night. I faithfully promise it shall not occur again."

At this juncture a rap came at the door, and Matilda asked if she could render her mistress any service before retiring.

"Yes, place my little son in bed beside me, and then you may retire."

Prof. Garcia had returned to the library, and, although now past midnight, lighted a cigar, and throwing his feet upon the big brass andirons, sat looking into the low grate fire before him. A smile of satisfaction rested on his face as he thought how completely he had veiled his rascality, and how thoroughly he had convinced his wife that she possessed a vivid imagination that was dangerous indeed to her own peace of mind.

Drawing from his pocket a small memorandum book he

looked over the dates upon which Mademoiselle Marie was to visit her young friend Mademoiselle Inez in Naples, and found it to be on the first week of the following month. Dropping the book in his lap, he nervously shook the ashes from his cigar and said to himself: "An eventful week; ah, yes, truly an eventful week to us all." And as the results of all his planning and treacheries flashed upon his mind, he seemed to be surrounded by hideous objects, presenting all kinds of deformities, yet all pointing their fiery fingers at him. Turning his eyes from the burning embers of the fireplace as if to escape the spectacle, a fearful dread passed over him, and for a moment all was darkness; but suddenly regaining himself, he arose, and staggering backward seized a chair to suport his weak and trembling footsteps, till he reached the decanter of brandy. Removing the large glass stopper, which he clutched tightly in his hand, he drained the decanter to ts last drop, and, violently throwing the stopper to the floor, reeled across the library and fell in a semi-conscious state upon the sofa.

Madame Garcia, who was dozing in the adjoining room, with her little boy in her arms, was startled by the crashing sound in the library; and carefully arranging for the comfort of the little boy, she quietly arose, and, wrapping an afghan about her, opened the door of the corridor, and stepped noiselessly into the library, where she found her husband in a deep and sonorous sleep. Seeing nothing to arouse her curiosity or alarm, she walked toward the door, about to return to her sleeping apartment, when her foot came in contact with the little memorandum-book that the Professor had so carelessly dropped to the floor. Quick as thought, she placed it in her bosom and hastily returned to her own apartments.

The gray light of early morn was now stealing through the crevices of the casement, and the little wood-birds sang out in deafening chorus as they welcomed the coming of another day. Madame Garcia seated herself in an easy-chair by the window, pushed aside the drapery, and took from her bosom the little book. As she opened it, she read the guilty purposes of her faithless husband, and quickly returning to the library, dropped the little "message of destruction" again upon the floor. Softly closing the door, she returned to her chamber, and throwing herself upon the bed, beside her sleeping boy, wept as woman never wept before.

#### CHAPTER THIRD.

The Lavini party passed off pleasantly. Lieutenant Pachi was in constant attendance upon Mademoiselle Marie after the departure of Madame Garcia and her husband. Of course the sudden illness of Madame Garcia was commented upon by all present as a strikingly strange occurrence. Some days afterward, at the residence of General Pachi, in Naples, the subject was again referred to, when Lieutenant Pachi, amongst other things, spoke of the improprieties of Mademoiselle Marie, referring more especially to those of a marked and conspicuous character.

"Why, my son, you quite astonish me with your criticisms," said General Pachi. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Perhaps, father, you would be still more astonished if you were to know of the intimacies existing between Mademoiselle Marie and that handsome Professor, Meonta Garcia."

"Intimacies! intimacies! Why, my son, it must be you have forgotten that it is quite beneath the dignity of an officer to assail the character of a lady, much less a lady of her parentage!"

"No, father, I have not forgotten, nor have I assailed the character of any one; yet I do most positively deplore that training of young ladies which permits of so many liberties and cloaks so many indiscretions under the garb of social privilege."

"And so do I, my son; but your language has excited

my curiosity beyond control, almost. Suppose we retire to the drawing-room, that I may more thoroughly understand you."

As General Pachi arose to leave the room, he thought to himself: "There's something passing strange in the amount of interest displayed by my son in the welfare and good behavior of Mademoiselle Marie. It must be that he has some especial reason for it all. It certainly cannot be that he is really in love with her, and yet it might be so; and if so, what an admirable match! And how delightful the union of two families so compatible with each other in all particulars! Besides—let's see—the Lavini estate is one of the wealthiest in all Italy." At this juncture of thought, the General had arrived in the ante-room, and was just drawing a match from under the marble mantel to light his cheroot; he then rested himself comfortably before the large open window-case of the drawing-room. Lieutenant Pachi followed his father into the drawingroom, and had determined upon telling him what he had seen at the Lavini party; and had further decided to inform his father that he was indeed very anxious to renew his former acquaintance with Mademoiselle Marie.

"I say, my son, won't you be more explicit in expressing your ideas of Mademoiselle Marie's improprieties? You cannot imagine how nonplussed I am at even an inference of such a thing. Mademoiselle Marie has been tutored by an accomplished person, and I am quite sure it has been generally conceded that she, above all her associates, was distinguished for gentleness of manner and correct deportment."

"Yes, father," said the lieutenant, "now that I have left an inference, I should explain my meaning. You will

recall the sudden illness of Madame Garcia at the Lavini party; and can you imagine the cause of it?"

"Why, to be sure, my son," said the General. "Madame Garcia is subject to such attacks; at least, so her husband informed us. Besides, you will remember the heat of the conservatory was oppressive at times; in fact, almost unbearable at the time Madame Garcia fell to the floor."

"True, Madame Garcia may be subject to such attacks," said Lieutenant Pachi. "But unless I am mightily mistaken, the cause of her illness that night was not the excessive heat of the conservatory, but from other causes, best known to herself."

"If that be true, my son, how came you in possession of so much knowledge of Madame Garcia's misfortunes?" said General Pachi, with an expression of wonderment upon his face.

"Purely by accident, father," said the lieutenent, earnestly, "purely by accident; and oh, how many times in life we are taught to deplore everything accidental! In fact, accidents are always disastrous to something—either life, property, or happiness, and possibly to all three."

"Your language is quite complex, my son; in fact irritating; and I do hope you will talk plainly to your father. What do you mean to infer—that Madame Garcia met with an accident disastrous to her life?"

"No, father," answered the lieutenant, with emotion, "not, perhaps, to life—that is, to live, move, breathe, and all that; but, truly, there occurred an accident that night most disastrous to the happiness not only of Madame Garcia, but to the happiness of us all."

"And do you know this to be true, or is it the outpouring of some gossipy and envious creature?" said General Pachi, who was by this time becoming deeply interested in the development of affairs.

"Unless my eyes have wofully deceived me, I saw a spectacle that was shocking indeed; and as hard as I have tried to rid my mind of the remembrance of it, it haunts me as a hideous nightmare, and I have concluded to make a confidant of you, my father. You will doubtless remember that, owing to my tardiness in arriving at the conservatory, Mademoiselle Marie accepted the invitation of Prof. Garcia for the waltz which was being danced at the time of my arrival; and when, after a few moments' search for Mademoiselle Marie, I was informed by Signor Lavini, her father, that his daughter, quite embarrassed at my not having been present to join her in the waltz dedicated to her, and for which I had so particularly asked the pleasure of her company, had accepted the invitation of Prof. Garcia, and was at that moment waltzing somewhere upon the floor of the conservatory. He said also that he should always remember the kindly act of the Professor in leaving his own wife unattended for the purpose of relieving the embarrassment of his daughter. Feeling quite chagrined at my own stupidity, I asked Signor Lavini for an introduction to Madame Garcia, wishing as far as possible to amend the awkward position I had placed so many in. Signor Lavini kindly introduced me to the wife of the Professor, and after a few moments' conversation Madame Garcia consented to join me in the waltz. It was during this waltz that I saw Mademoiselle Marie Lavini close in the embrace of the handsome Professor, in the seclusion of the palm-leaves at the extreme end of the conservatory;

and at that very moment Madame Garcia screamed out and fell senseless to the floor."

General Pachi, who had jumped to his feet at the startling announcement, filled with indignation, denounced the Professor in no mean language; and tapping the bell on the library table before him, ordered his equipage to be in readiness at once, at the same time directing his son to prepare himself for a journey to Lavini Castle.

"A journey to Lavini Castle!" said the young lieutenant; "not for me, father. Under no circumstances could I consent to visit Lavini Castle on business of this character; and if you have any regard for my feelings you will not insist that I shall accompany you."

"Oh no, my son, I do not insist, nor is it my wish to embarrass you; I only thought you were enough interested in the affairs of Mademoiselle Marie to aid in any enterprise whose object was to protect her from undue censure. Yet, of course, I may be mistaken as to your real sentiment in this regard."

"My real sentiment is the sentiment I always express," answered the lieutenant. "To say that I am interested in the welfare of Mademoiselle Marie would be to express myself mildly indeed. To be truthful, father, I have to confess that from the moment I saw her on the river, and as the happy, innocent play-times of our youth dawned upon me, I seemed to be in a world of blossoming roses, full of sweetness and perfection. In fact, the very air seemed purer, the sunny fields looked brighter, and the happy birds sang louder, as if to herald to the world the fulness of our joy; the laughing, prattling river, dancing in the sunbeams, joined the chorus, and all the world seemed pouring out its benediction upon us.

"It is true, my father, she is bewitchingly beautiful; and although I had practically made up my mind to postpone marriage until I was permanently located in military service, I am frank, however, to say that the beautiful face and sweet, winning ways of Mademoiselle Marie had quite induced me to change my mind, but for that unfortunate occurrence at the party. It makes me miserable indeed. How could she have so grossly forgotten herself?"

"And you are truly in love with her, my son?" said the General, anxiously.

"Yes, father, I have been her playmate in childhood; and it is not alone her dark, handsome face and soft, sweet eyes that have so completely enamoured me, but her gentle, thoughtful way and happy, kindly disposition; besides all else, a character so confiding and sincere. Yet, with all, there is one element in her nature that almost frightens me when I think of it: she was so desperate in some of her childish enterprises, seeming to have plenty of confidence in that 'special act of providence' so often referred to after narrow escapes, etc."

"Yes," said the General, "this character she possesses, and it is one her father had before her. When but a lad, I remember his having joined an outing party, and the deprivations he unnecessarily endured were something marvellous; indeed so much so, that the press commented freely upon them. So you see Mademoiselle Marie honestly possesses this queer trait of character. One question more, my son, and then I shall be off to the Castle. In your opinion, Madame Garcia's sudden illness was the result of what she saw while dancing with you. Is she aware, do you think, that you also witnessed the spectacle?"

"This I could not say, father, yet it is my impression that she is."

"Very well, my son; I shall make it my business to inform Signor Lavini at the earliest possible moment, though it is a very disagreeable duty."

At this moment the vehicle arrived; and as General Pachi arose and passed out of the drawing-room, Madame Pachi was about to enter the door.

"My dear," said the General, "I am going to Lavini Castle this morning, and should be delighted to have you accompany me; the drive would doubtless benefit you."

"And I should be delighted to go," said Madame Pachi; and hastily arranging her wraps, General Pachi and his wife were soon on the way to the Castle.

After having driven a short distance, Madame Pachi remarked that it was something uncommon, so long a drive, and so early in the morning, too.

"Yes," said the General; "but as the business was quite important I thought best to go early."

Madame Pachi, knowing of her husband's financial embarrassment, supposed the business to be in the direction of asking for a loan of a sufficient sum to relieve his pressing needs. The General, who had been retired from military service in the south of Italy, had been brevetted a Brigadier-General, and placed on duty as Paymaster-General to the western division of the army, with his headquarters in Naples. The duties of his position required but a small portion of his time each day; and as the General was naturally of a sociable and, above all, a charitable turn of mind, he found plenty of ways to pass leisure hours agreeably to his liking. A syndicate, or land-grant system, had been talked about among the capitalists of Naples, and at

a meeting of the stockholders it was decided to call upon the General and solicit not only his capital, but also his knowledge of the southern territories of Italy.

Consequently the General had embarked in the enterprise of purchasing city and country lands. Mammoth returns were expected from all moneys invested, and glowing accounts of real-estate booms appeared each day in the papers. The General, who was on the down-hill side of life, had many extravagant ideas and useless expenditures; he gave lavishly to the poor, and provided an abundance of comfort and luxuries for his family. His cash expenditures each day amounted to a handsome sum, and not a cent was kept of the moneys spent from his pocket; yet an accurate account, of course, of all moneys drawn from the government was necessary. The General had upon several occasions found it necessary to appropriate part of his son's salary in order to satisfy his expenditures, and at last he awoke to the stern reality that his cash indebtedness to balance an overdrawn account was simply overwhelming; yet he had anticipated lucrative returns from his land investments, and, should he not be disappointed, his many obligations would be promptly liquidated. Yet the end of the fiscal year was near at hand, when the government required a final settlement of accounts to date.

With this fact staring him in the face, he had resolved to first ascertain whether his son's affections for Mademoiselle Marie were reciprocated, and, if so, to hasten their marriage as fast as possible.

This in reality was the reason of the General's visit to Lavini Castle, as well as to inform Signor Lavini of the strange and, to say the least, highly improper actions of his daughter.

General Pachi, who had not answered his wife's inquiry for some time, sat with his eyes riveted upon a large, bright figure of the lap-robe, occasionally urging the horses to a faster speed, unconsciously applying the lash from time to time, which in part satisfied his desire for speedy consummation of affairs. Finally aroused from his reverie by the sound and clatter of hoofs in the road, he answered Madame Pachi by saying that there was a strong probability of being able to arrange his financial affairs to his complete satisfaction, yet much depended upon the manner in which his proposition should be entertained by Signor Lavini.

"In fact," said the General, "I should not be at all surprised at the marriage of Mademoiselle Marie at an early day."

"The marriage of Mademoiselle Marie! Why, my dear husband," said Madame Pachi, "Marie Lavini is but a child. To think she is soon to marry seems absurd indeed."

"Perhaps, my good wife," said General Pachi, "it won't seem so awfully absurd when you find that Mademoiselle Marie Lavini is to marry the son of one of the most estimable ladies in Naples, and that she is none other than the blessed creature by my side."

"General," said Madame Pachi, "another attack of spontaneous spoons, I suppose. Really, you cannot imagine how flattered I am at such an explosion as this. Yet, "jamais bon conveur ne fut pris." I sometimes think old men, like old toddy, improve with age. But, all jesting aside, you surely cannot be in earnest regarding the marriage of Marie to our son William. Do you forget the letter he wrote from Milan wherein he expressed himself as emphatically opposed to early marriages, and stating that the requirements of early military life were of a character

calculated to subject an officer to all kinds of exposure, that he may know something of what field-service really is, and saying further that to subject the object of one's affections to such a life would be wrong indeed?"

"I remember the letter," answered the General; "but things have changed since then. Our son has finished his course at Milan, and blooms now as a full-fledged lieutenant awaiting orders, and, if I may compliment myself to that extent, believes that his father's high rank and popularity should influence an accessible and somewhat agreeable location in the service; and besides all this, William is very much smitten with the bright face of Mademoiselle Marie, and I have positive knowledge that were he to find his affections reciprocated by her he would ask her hand in marriage."

"Wouldn't it be delightful, General!" said Madame Pachi. "Just think of it: our son to marry the daughter of one of the wealthiest and most cultured citizens of all Italy. A handsome property would doubtless accompany Marie in this exploit; and had you reflected, my dear, this very marriage might be the means of relieving your temporary embarrassment in a financial point of view?"

As the General was not prompt in answering her inquiry, Madame Pachi, leaning forward, observed that her husband's face was white as death. With a cry of alarm she seized his hand, but before she could utter a word came the General's assurance that his condition was momentarily improving, and that it was due to fatigue from physical and mental overwork. Madame Pachi insisted upon stopping the vehicle and their alighting, for a time at least; but the General, who had now recovered his usual color, distracted the idea by saying that he had a confession to make which would

doubtless absorb all the time between this and Lavini Castle. Madame Pachi, who possessed no small share of that inquisitiveness so often attributed to her sex, was all eyes and ears in a moment, and she could not have been induced to stop the vehicle one second after the announcement had been made that something was to be confessed.

It has, in fact, been an enigma to me that the Roman Propaganda, so celebrated for its arrangements in the everlasting fitness of things, did not discover the insatiate desire of the fair sex to hear confessions of all kinds and govern itself accordingly; it would surely have increased the number of church-goers to an enormous extent.

"My dear wife," said the General, "the object of my visit to Lavini Castle this day is to arrange, if possible, the marriage of Mademoiselle Marie Lavini to our son; should I succeed in the enterprise, all will be well; but should I fail to consummate arrangements, I am lost."

"Lost! Lost! What in Heaven's name do you mean?" cried Madame Pachi, in amazement.

"I mean," said the General, "that unless I succeed in raising the sum of twenty thousand lire before the close of the fiscal year, I shall be cashiered from the service, disgraced, and probably imprisoned as a confiscator of public moneys."

"Twenty thouand lire! In Heaven's name, General, why have you kept this from me? Have I not always been deeply interested in all that pertained to your affairs in life? Have we not struggled together through the rocky road of existence until the silver marks of Father Time are indelibly stamped upon us. And yet at the edge of all you leave me out of your troubles, and perhaps your pleasures are without me too."

As Madame Pachi uttered these words she burst into tears. The General, whose poor old heart seemed ready to break, said nothing; but, dropping the lines upon the footman's driving-cushion, he threw both arms around the neck of Madame Pachi, and, poking his nose through the corkscrew curls, succeeded in kissing the forehead of his beloved wife. At this very moment a team of tandem passed, in which were seated a party of young people ostensibly from Naples, and who seemed to appreciate beyond description the attitude of the General and his wife.

Suddenly relinquishing his hold, the General seized the reins, and, turning down the pike to the left, was soon upon the property of Signor Lavini. Madame Pachi, who had by this time dried her eyes and arranged her snowwhite curls as best she could, inquired if her son was aware of the character of the visit he was about to inflict upon the Lavini household. General Pachi answered in the affirmative, saying that aside from one little indiscretion upon the part of Mademoiselle Marie, which doubtless could be explained, William was completely captivated by her; yet the fact of his having seen her in the embrace of the handsome Prof. Garcia on the night of the conservatory party at the Castle had troubled him unceasingly.

"Mademoiselle Marie in the arms of Prof. Garcia! Ridiculous!" said Madame Pachi. "How very absurd! I always thought William possessed better sense than to believe such trash."

"Oh! but he saw it with his own eyes," said the General.

"There surely must be some mistake, General," said Madame Pachi.

"Possibly. But really, my dear, I could believe most anything of that man Garcia; his reputation in that direction is especially bad."

"You will doubtless remember the sudden illness of Madame Garcia at Lavini Castle. Well, our son, who was in her company at the moment she fell to the floor, insists that she witnessed at that very moment the spectacle I have just spoken of; though Madame Garcia has never alluded to the subject since."

"How shocking! I cannot possibly imagine such an oc-

"Your memory seems quite defective," said the General, drolly; "it was only a few moments ago you and I, old as we are, were caught in the very same predicament, and I assure you I did not intend to present such a spectacle when I left Naples. So you see, my dear, how uncertain everything is. To-day we live, but to-morrow we live no more. Doubtless this little mistake upon the part of Mademoiselle Marie was owing to carelessness alone, and not to any wilful intention or want of morals. Besides, you must bear in mind that young ladies making their first appearance in social life are quite likely to become suddenly smitten with handsome faces, and there is no disputing the fact that Prof. Garcia is one of the handsomest men in Naples; and though very much older than Mademoiselle Marie, he retains his youthful freshness to a remarkable extent."

Madame Pachi interrupted by calling attention to the bridge crossing the stream below, and was about to ask the General what stream it was, when the General exclaimed:

"The Tibez, I declare. I had quite forgotten myself.
We are soon to be at the Castle; and now, my dear wife,

that you know all, you can surely appreciate how necessary it is that I should succeed in bringing about mutual feelings of affection between the charming daughter of Signor Lavini and our true and noble son."

A few moments later, and General Pachi and his wife were shaking hands with Signor Lavini and his wife. As the General arrived at the time the Lavini family were about to dine, of course hospitalities were extended and accepted; and as Mademoiselle Marie failed to put in an appearance, General Pachi inquired as to her whereabouts, and was informed by her father that she had left, but a few moments before their arrival, by tandem for Naples, where she was to visit her old school-friend, Mademoiselle Inez Baretti, for a week or more. General Pachi expressed his regret at her absence, and all engaged in conversation upon topics in general during the time dinner was being served; and after dinner the ladies retired to the drawing-room, while Signor Lavini and General Pachi found their way into the smoking-room, to enjoy an havana and talk over old times together. After lighting cigars, and being comfortably seated at the open windows, General Pachi remarked that though the solitude of the country was always quite disagreeable to him, yet he much enjoyed an occasional visit to the pure delicious air of the country, and thought it was so invigorating to one whose habits were sedentary; he still further inquiringly wondered how Signor Lavini passed his leisure time.

"In various ways," answered Signor Lavini. "You will observe that we, at least, have comfortable surroundings, plenty of good books, and besides we get the morning and evening papers each day, which absorb considerable time. In summer we have fishing, boating, and the like; and of

course you know how popular Lavini Castle has always been as a rendezvous for dancing and lawn parties. This season has been particularly quiet with us because of the so enfeebled health of Madame Lavini.

"It is generally understood that Madame Lavini's time on earth is short, and, purely out of consideration for her, gayeties have become a thing of the past with us. The party given in honor of our daughter's début was quite disastrous to the health of my dear wife. This, General, is the one dark cloud that floats between me and complete happiness—the approaching death of my beloved wife. How can I ever endure the separation? It is so unfortunate that humanity should be called upon to stand its hardest shocks when enfeebled by age and shattered by cares, and its trembling limbs are tottering to the grave."

"Quite right, Signor," answered General Pachi; "and do you know I never felt that fact so keenly as to-day."

"Indeed?" answered Signor Lavini; "some new care, I suppose?"

"Yes, some new ones, added to the long list of old ones, seem to weigh me down; yet I strive to be gay and happy for my dear family's sake, and you know well, Lavini, it is unnatural for me to be gloomy and downcast; but altogether I have been quite unfortunate in money matters."

"Well, we should endeavor to throw off our gloomy feelings, and make the best of a bad job, Pachi," said Signor Lavini. "I also spend many gloomy hours in this my country home; yet I think we may all lessen our sadness and improve ourselves by different occupations agreeable to our various tastes. In fact, General Pachi, I have made the acquaintance of a certain mineralogical professor; his name (more Spanish than otherwise) is Garcia. Possibly

you have the pleasure of his acquaintance. He resides in Naples, and has been very much interested in a certain quartz found accidentally by the boat-house wharf. He seems also to have taken a personal interest in me, and I assure you we have passed many and many happy hours together of late. Marie is completely infatuated with the art."

During this conversation General Pachi had listened with every sinew of his body on strain; and as the words rolled from the lips of Signor Lavini, he felt that the time had arrived when he should inform his old friend of the true state of affairs existing between his beloved child and the miserable wretch who sought her untimely destruction. All doubts as to any mistake upon the part of his son's having seen Mademoiselle Marie in the arms of this "prowling wolf" in disguise were at once dispelled.

Dropping his feet to the floor, the General turned in his chair, and looking into the careworn face of his dear old friend and schoolmate, said:

"My dear Lavini, pardon me for asking, but do you know the character Prof. Garcia bears in Naples?"

"I do not, indeed," answered Signor Lavini. "The high and influential position he fills in the School of Mines should plead his fitness to enter the homes of all, should it not? Besides, his name was mentioned by one of our dearest friends, Madame Baretti, in whose home our daughter is to spend the coming week. Therefore an invitation was extended to him, and he was present at the conservatory party given here in honor of our daughter's first appearance in society, and I'm sure all were delighted with his presence and that of his charming wife. In fact, Pachi, as we are old-time chums, I can say that I was very much pleased

with Madame Garcia. Of course we old fellows get foxy once in a while, and Madame Lavini has insinuated two or three times that she thought I was very attentive to the Professor's wife, and how much she liked the Professor. Pachi, she thinks he is perfection itself, chiefly, I presume, because he fails to bring Madame Garcia out every time he comes. But, my dear General, why do you look so serious, as if something awful had happened? Can't an old fellow like me enjoy a little innocent sport once in a while?"

"Yes, my dear Lavini, innocent sport is good exercise for both young and old."

"Then why do you look so at me, General? Are you in pain? You seem to be trembling."

"No bodily pain, my dear Lavini; only my heart aches at the disagreeable duty I have to perform, the sorrow that I must inflict upon you, in the midst of so much contentment."

"Sorrow is nothing new to me, General," returned Signor Lavini; "my poor old shoulders have borne a heavy load of trouble all these years; but for my life I cannot imagine what's coming at this late day to torment me. You are pale as death, General Pachi; has some accident befallen our daughter? Has she been thrown from the vehicle and killed? O God, have mercy on our poor child!"

"No, no," gasped the General, "she has not been thrown from the carriage, nor is she dead; but, Signor, she is in danger of worse than death, and that is living shame."

"Shame! How dare you speak the word in connection with purity itself?" answered Signor Lavini, as he stood defiantly erect. "Shame, say you, and do you come here to accept our hospitalities, and then hoot shame upon the name of one as spotless as an angel?"

'Be calm, Signor; be calm, I pray you," answered the General, as he tremblingly arose to explain himself. "I have not pronounced shame upon the head of your darling child. I have come here to-day to warn you of an approaching evil, and to shelter the very one you have so peevishly accused me of pronouncing shame upon from a life of sorrow and degradation."

"Forgive me, my old friend, forgive me; but oh! Marie is the one bright shining star left us in this dreary world, and should anything befall her, we would droop our heads and die. Tell me, oh! tell me without delay her peril, and I will fly to her rescue and punish the offender."

"Then from this moment deny her the presence of Prof. Garcia. He is a lurking panther in disguise, seeking whom he may devour. His pretence of finding peculiar specimens of quartz upon this property, in my opinion, is false in every particular, and serves but for an excuse to enjoy the secret company of your unsuspecting daughter."

"And how were your suspicions aroused, General? Was your informant reliable?" asked Signor Lavini, in a great state of excitement.

"It was the confession of my son William that on the night of the conservatory party he saw Mademoiselle Marie Lavini close in the embrace of Professor Garcia in a secluded spot, and that, at the very moment the spectacle met his eyes, Madame Garcia, who was waltzing beside him, fell senseless to the floor of the conservatory. Doubtless you well remember the occurrence; and although Madame Garcia has never alluded to the subject since, my son could not have been mistaken in what he saw. In fact, everything seems to point toward the guilt of the treacherous Professor."

"And will you tell me why your son so long kept silence upon a subject so important to us all?"

"For more reasons than one," answered the General. "First of all, you will remember that in former years Mademoiselle Marie and my son William were schoolmates together, between whom a strong childish affection existed. Our son went to college some eight years ago, during which time William developed into manhood, while Mademoiselle Marie blossomed into a most beautiful womanhood. day of our meeting on the river was to my son the happiest day of all his life. There he beheld, for the first time, the face he had loved as a child, adorned with most perfect womanhood. Her majestic, stately form and haughty carriage denoted her rank and station. From that moment William decided that if by any process of reformation or purification he could make himself worthy of so great a blessing, he should seek her hand in marriage. Not knowing or being able to account for her intimacy with Prof. Garcia, William had decided to make a casual inquiry of me, believing that if the Professor had enjoyed a long, intimate association with the family I surely would be aware of the fact, and in this way he hoped to explain away the fact of Mademoiselle Marie's having been placed in so unfortunate a predicament. But so soon as he had told his story, he could not help but see the surprise and astonishment that rested upon my face at the announcement of such a peculiar occurrence, and at last decided to inform me that he was more than casually interested in the affairs of Mademoiselle Marie; that the unfortunate affair had harassed him almost to death. So you see, Signor Lavini, I have told you all, and may God direct you in your dealings with a robber that comes 'like a thief in the night,' designing to ruin your darling child!"

During the explanation Signor Lavini sat with eyes like coals of fire riveted upon his informant; and as soon as the last word had left the General's lips, Signor Lavini jumped quickly to his feet and, rushing to the door of the smoking-room, called in a loud, impassioned tone for Phil to have his equipage in readiness at once, and to prepare himself for a journey to Naples. Hastening back to where the General stood, he once more took his hand, and, as the tears rolled down his wrinkled face, he said:

"My dear old comrade, you are the rescuer of all my hopes, my joys, my sole delight on earth; and for your services not I alone rejoice, but the good angels above will bless you for your kindly watchings over my darling child."

The General, who was too much overcome to say a word, pressed the hand of Signor Lavini and, turning his face to the window-pane, sobbed like a child.

Signor Lavini excused himself for a few moments; and as the General dried his eyes and saw that a storm was brewing, he decided to return at once to Naples. Consequently all necessary arrangements were made. The ladies had finished their discourse in the drawing-room just as General Pachi entered to inform Madame Pachi that a storm was imminent and all haste was desirable. A general hand-shaking took place, and promises to repeat the visit were made; gossamers were distributed, and shortly after the conveyance was at the door.

Phil, who stood with his hands upon the bridles at the horses' heads, was glum as an oyster; and as General Pachi stepped into the outer vestibule, Signor Lavini entered, and whispered in the ear of the General that his daughter

should sleep that night beneath his own roof, safe from all exposures, and further stated that, should the weather prove too rough to return with his daughter through the night, he should presume to encroach upon the General's hospitality till the dawning of another day. General Pachi insisted upon his not returning that night, but said that he should have all preparations made for their comfort at his own house in Naples. With a hasty good-by the General and his wife departed, but not before placing some silver in the hand of Phil, who immediately changed the sombre expression of his face to that of a broad grin.

Signor Lavini, who had assisted the General's wife into the carriage, hastened up the stairway; and though he trembled at the task, he had decided to tell his poor sick wife the whole truth regarding their darling child. This he proceeded to do, knowing that some explanation would be necessary to account for his sudden departure for Naples at that hour of the night. He thought that to make a clean breast of it would be a charity to one whose imaginations are invariably worse than the truth itself. The shock was indeed terrific. Madame Lavini retired at once, and it was late in the evening before Signor Lavini and Phil were on their way to Naples.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

GENERAL PACHI returned home at nine o'clock in the evening, and no sooner entered than he was informed by his son that Madame Garcia had just been there, in a great state of excitement, having in her possession a letter from her husband which had been sent by private messenger to her at her residence, 91 Vini Place. Suspecting at once that the person referred to in the letter was Mademoiselle Marie Lavini, Madame Garcia had hastened to ascertain, if possible, whether she was in Naples or not. General Pachi read the following letter aloud:

"MADAME GARCIA:—By the time you read this letter your husband will have left Naples forever. Your jealous tauntings have become unbearable, and the object of your jealous frenzy accompanies me. May the wretched monster that has separated us give you consolation in your loneliness and misery.

MEONTA GARCIA."

"My God! my God!" gasped the General as he sank back in his chair. "Can it be that this cowardly villain has induced Mademoiselle Marie Lavini to leave the country with him? We shall alarm the city, that he may be foiled in his devilish enterprise. My son, if we fail tonight in securing the person of Mademoiselle Marie Lavini, your poor old father will be cashiered from the service of his country and go down to his grave disgraced. Do not stop to ask me what I mean, only let these words ring in your ears till you return to Lavini Castle, with Mademoiselle Marie Lavini in safety."

Lieutenant Pachi was speechless with amazement, while the General swooned away in his chair. The first thing to do was to administer restoratives to his father, that the line of immediate action might be sanctioned by his cool judgment; soon the General "was himself again" and all was furor and excitement. Mounted upon two of the fastest horses in the General's stables, Lieutenant and General Pachi were in a hot gallop through the rain and mist, bound again for Lavini Castle. The instruction to his son before leaving was that a sharp lookout should be kept in the mist, and if any vehicle passed them on the road, to hail the passengers and find out the whereabouts of Signor Lavini, who had left the castle en route for Naples.

No sooner had they passed the switchman's lookout at the Union Depot than the clatter of wheels was heard upon the iron.

"Who is there?" cried Lieutenant Pachi.

"Signor Lavini," came the shrill voice of Phil Aggi, the horseman.

"Stop!" cried the lieutenant.

Signor Lavini's carriage stopped, just as the General's horse came galloping up.

"Signor Lavini," said the General, "lose no time in reaching the station-house, and prepare yourself for news that would appal the stoutest heart. Remember, though, you are in the midst of friends who feel the shock as keenly as yourself."

"Is my darling child dead?" came the piteous cry of the poor old man, mingled with the moaning of the wind and spattering of the rain.

"No, Signor, not dead," answered the General, "nor is she sick, I hope. You shall know all in a few moments.

"Turn down to the first light you see, and we shall be there to meet you."

So all were off at a break-neck pace, and but a few moments elapsed before Lieutenant Pachi stood before the door of the Lavini carriage at the station-house, ready to assist him in alighting from the same. Supporting him to a seat in the depot, the General took a flask of brandy from his great-coat pocket, and Signor Lavini drank liberally.

Taking the letter from the hand of Lieutenant Pachi, who stood eagerly awaiting the first opportunity to present the same, the poor old man finished the epistle. He burst into tears, and piteously begged them to save his child.

A few hasty inquiries were made as to the location of the house of Madame Baretti, where his daughter was visiting, and where Signor Lavini requested to be taken at once, that their anticipations and fears might be verified, and that the whole truth of his daughter's departure might be known.

General Pachi assisted his old friend into the carriage, and turning to his son, said: "William, let there be no delay in reaching the home of Madame Baretti. And Philip," said the General, "you will closely follow the horse of Lieutenant Pachi to its destination."

Lieutenant Pachi seized the bridle-rein of the animal his father had been riding, and pricking the sides of his own horse, started up the Via —— at a galloping speed. General Pachi seated himself beside Signor Lavini, and all were in motion again.

Signor Lavini, feeling considerably revived and sustained by the brandy he had taken, swore vengeance upon the head of the dastardly villain whose seductive influence had won the affections of his blessed child. Yet for his life he could not account for the careless manner in which Madame Baretti had permitted her daughter to enter such a danger.

Soon the sound of music was heard, and the General remarked that the carriage must be nearing the Via-de-Toledo, the chief thoroughfare of Naples.

"Yes," answered Signor Lavini; "and to the right, yonder on the terrace, is the house in which Madame Baretti resides."

As the carriage neared the terrace, Lieutenant Pachi came galloping back towards Lavini's carriage and asked if the house in front of which hung a row of Japanese lanterns was the one.

Signor Lavini, pushing his head and shoulders through the carriage window, counted from the corner and answered in the affirmative. Soon the carriage stood at the door of Madame Baretti's old mansion. General Pachi alighted, and assisted Signor Lavini from the carriage, and both walked up the old stone stairway arm-in-arm.

As Lieutenant Pachi sat mounted on his iron-gray mare below, and watched his father and Signor Lavini ascending the stairway, something in his throat seemed to choke him. The sight was sad indeed. Signor Lavini with his long gray locks loosely hanging over his shoulders, and the bright flashing lights, sparkling from under the veranda, falling upon the uniformed figure of his father, was a scene calculated to touch the strongest heart, when the character of their mission was known. One poor feeble old man out at midnight in the rain and storm, searching for his only child, and the other looking for a chance to assist him.

General Pachi stepped up to sound the bell, just as the door was thrown open in his face. A lady and gentleman stood in the open door, and back of them stood Madame Baretti and her daughter shaking hands and bidding good-night to their guests. As the door was ajar, Lieutenant Pachi could see from the street the merry gathering, and hoped and prayed away down in his heart that some awful mistake had been made, and that soon the face of Mademoiselle Marie would appear in the window. As soon as Madame Baretti recognized the face of Signor Lavini she rushed to the door and, seizing him by the hand, said:

"Thank God, you have arrived. Your daughter is with you, of course. We had become quite anxious about her. She left early in the evening for a short walk with Prof. Garcia, and has not returned. We did not feel alarmed till the storm and fog appeared, but—"

Madame Baretti never finished the sentence. Signor Lavini fell heavily to the floor, and Madame Baretti screamed as she looked upon the deathlike face of the poor old man.

General Pachi rushed forward to seize the falling body of his friend, and Lieutenant Pachi, who took in the situation at a glance, leaped from his horse and in a second stood beside his father, who was kneeling over the prostrate form of Signor Lavini.

Madame Baretti in a wild, excited manner asked the cause of Signor Lavini's sudden illness, and was promptly answered by the lieutenant to the effect that his child was lost.

"Lost! Lost!" gasped the half-unconscious father as he relapsed again into oblivion. And these two word swere the subject of his delirious mutterings for months after.

The excitement had now reached its height. Guests

were crowding in and out of the hallway, and everything was turmoil and confusion.

General Pachi dispatched his son for a physician, who soon arrived, and Signor Lavini was placed in an ambulance and taken to the home of the Pachis, where constant medical attention and good nursing were given him.

As the body of Signor Lavini was being carried down the old stone steps, where only a little while before his beloved daughter had wandered innocently away from home and friends, Phil Aggi saw his pallid face in the livid light of the colored lamps; and leaping from the driving-box, let out one of the most unearthly screams that ever came from human lips.

"What, dead! My master dead!" cried Phil. "O Signor Lavini, speak and tell me what to say to Madame Lavini when I go back to the castle!"

It was only after long and repeated attempts that Phil Aggi was brought to believe that his master was not dead, but unconscious.

General Pachi and his son entered the parlor of Madame Baretti, deeming it courteous at least to make some explanation of their unexpected presence and the furor and confusion their visit had occasioned. As the General stepped through the archway, Madame Baretti introduced him to her guests, and, as is customary in Italy, the son was introduced by the father.

General Pachi did not remove his military great-coat, but, stepping to the centre of the room, addressed the guests. As soon as his deep bass voice was heard, all eyes were upon him. In very few words he made known the fact that Mademoiselle Marie Lavini was not to be found in Naples, and that fears were entertained as to her having

been foully dealt with in the streets of the city. But said a voice:

- "Was she not in the company of Prof. Meonta Garcia?"
- "Yes," answered the General; "do you know his whereabouts?"
- "I do not indeed," responded a tall, handsome man with smooth face, "but I suppose his whereabouts can be readily ascertained."

At this moment Madame Baretti, who, with her daughter, was crying and sobbing, stepped from behind the drapery and introduced the young man in question as the son of Police Magistrate Rebagliati. The General taking the hand of the young man, and at the same time nodding to his son, all three excused themselves and passed out of the room.

Arrangements were speedily made for the meeting of Police Magistrate Rebagliati at the home of General Pachi, which was to take place at two in the morning, as all necessary haste in the way of ascertaining the whereabouts of Prof. Garcia was essential. General Pachi, stepping once more to the archway, politely asked all present to pardon their intrusion and the sadness their presence had occasioned, stating that with the coming of the morning light he hoped this terrible darkness would disappear. General Pachi, his son, and young Rebagliati hastened down the stairway to the street, where Rebagliati sounded a police whistle, and soon there was an officer upon the spot. The officer was directed to go at once to the home of the police magistrate and deliver a card which young Rebagliati had written to his father. Upon the card were these words:

"FATHER: Meet me at the residence of General William Pachi, 83 Cypress Avenue, without a moment's delay. Business of the greatest importance awaits you. Renoldi."

The officer hastened to the station-house, handed the card to the captain in charge of patrol, who, looking it over for a moment, said: "Something in the wind to-night, lads." Reaching to a silver knob that projected from the wall beside his desk, he gave it a jerk which was followed by the sound of a gong bell of no small dimensions, and the clatter of horses, feet was soon heard on the floor of the adjacent room.

"What news, captain?" sang out a deep, harsh voice from the transom over the door.

"A letter for Police Magistrate Rebagliati, to be delivered post-haste at his home."

The letter was handed to the patrolman, who was seated high up on a two-wheeled conveyance, with two prancing animals eager for exercise before him. In a second the great iron gates were thrown open, and the rumble of the heavy wheels was heard upon the pavement, until it grew fainter and fainter and finally died away.

The rain had ceased, the sky was clear, and the stars shone out as bright as upon a clear, cold night in winter; yet the wind howled dismally, like the moanings of the dying. It was nearing the hour of two in the morning as the patrol wagon rattled up to the stepping-stone before the General's mansion. Alighting, Police Magistrate Rebagliati hurriedly entered the house, and found General Pachi pacing the reception-room backward and forward.

"Good-morning, General," said Rebagliati. "Of what service can I be to you, and where is my son?"

"Your son," answered the General, "is in the parlor above. I shall call him. It is better that he should inform you of the terrible misfortune that has befallen us, as I am

completely worn out with the experiences of the early evening."

Madame Pachi, who had overheard the conversation, volunteered to call young Rebagliati, and in a few moments the police magistrate was in possession of all the facts in the case.

"Really," answered the magistrate, "there is a total want of that authority which would warrant me in proceedings of prosecution and expenditure of public moneys in seeking the whereabouts of Prof. Garcia. The father of the girl is lying at the point of death, and the mother in such very feeble health that it is feared the news of her daughter's absence will cause her death. So you see, General, the total want of necessary authority to proceed under the law, in the case."

"But," answered the General, "how about the wife of the absconding Professor? Has she no power to authorize proceedings in this case?"

"To be sure," answered the magistrate. "I did not understand that Prof. Garcia had left a wife behind him."

"Yes," answered the General, "a wife and one little son, dependent upon the charities of the world, I guess."

"The heartless wretch!" exclaimed the magistrate.

"The law will overhaul him some day, rest assured of that.

And do you know where the wife of this renegade Professor resides?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes," answered the General. "Madame Garcia was here to-night, and brought a letter which informed us of her husband's having left Naples. She gave my son her address. It is above the Observatory somewhere. One moment, please," asked the General, who stepped to the library and took the card of Madame Garcia from the basket. A pencil-

mark was drawn through the name, an act doubtless of Madame Garcia's in her wrath, but the address was distinct —"91 Vini Place."

Returning to the reception-room, General Pachi handed the magistrate the card. Rebagliati stepped to the table, took his hat, and calling his son, bade the General adieu, saying that as soon as he had interviewed Madame Garcia he would return to the mansion and inform him of the result of the interview. In a moment the wheels of the patrol wagon were again in motion. The General, who stepped to the door to give Phil Aggi instructions to stable Signor Lavini's horses, was astonished not to find him waiting, returned to the reception-room just as Lieutenant Pachi opened the door from the corridor.

- "Where did you send Phil Aggi?" inquired the General.
- "I gave him no instructions," answered the lieutenant, but supposed of course he was awaiting our return. Why? Is he not at the stepping-stone?"
  - "I could not see him," said the General.
- "By heavens! Do you suppose that stupid fellow has returned to the castle to report what he has seen? If so, it will kill Madame Lavini."

Lieutenant Pachi dashed out of doors, and looking up and down the street could not see the carriage of Signor Lavini. Hastening back to the mansion, he held a few words of conversation with his father, and it was decided to overtake Signor Lavini's carriage, if possible, before it arrived at the castle.

Phil Aggi, who could stand the presence of strange things no longer, had decided to return to the castle with all possible speed, and inform the old nurse Annine (his confidant) of all the queer things he had seen. So, without a word of warning, he had started at break-neck speed for the castle. He had been gone at least an hour before his absence was discovered, and was nearing Lavini Castle before Lieutenant Pachi left Naples. As soon as Phil arrived at the house he drove the horses to the stable, and, leaving them still attached to the vehicle, rushed up the back stairway through the attic to the rear corridor and pell-mell into Annine's room, forgetting all ceremony and blubbering and muttering to himself.

As the door was pushed from its latchings Annine sat up in bed, and Phil Aggi bawled out at the top of his voice:

"Signor Lavini is dead! Signor Lavini is dead!"

Annine, who knew nothing of SignorLavini's absence from home, and who was more asleep than awake, poked her big fat appendages out of bed to the floor, and sitting on the edge of the bed for a moment, to collect her wits, said:

"Philip, are you crazy, or what on earth brings you up at this time of the night?"

"Up!" cried Phil, "and haven't I been up all night—and such a night, Annine, I never saw!"

Madame Lavini, hearing the loud talking, and wondering what on earth could be the trouble at that hour of the night in Annine's apartments, threw a wrap about her shoulders and was listening at the door of the rear corridor.

Annine, who had now awoke enough to appreciate the character of the news, said:

"Phil, you do not mean to say that Master Lavini is dead!"

"Yes," cried Phil again, "Master Lavini is dead! and Mademoiselle Marie cannot be found in Naples!"

Madame Lavini overheard the terrible news, and from her lips came a shriek of terror as she reeled backward to the floor.

Phil rushed into the corridor, followed by Annine, whose night-robe was considerably shorter than commonly worn, and both were soon leaning over the lifeless body of their dear mistress, sobbing and crying as if their hearts would break. Just at this moment, Lieutenant Pachi, who had arrived at the front door of the castle, came bounding up the stairway, riding-whip in hand. He saw Annine's night-robe and the two fat legs projecting from beneath, while Phil stood blubbering by, with a tallow dip in his hand. Pachi burst into laughter in spite of himself; but, rubbing his eyes, he spied the body of Madame Lavini upon the floor between them, and rushing wildly down the corridor, pushed Annine aside and placed his ear to the heart of Madame Lavini. No sound. Seizing her pulseless wrist, he exclaimed:

"Dead! Oh, dead! My God, what a night is this!" Then jumping to his feet, he dealt the shivering form of Phil Aggi a merciless blow upon the head with his ridingwhip, and, stamping his foot upon the floor, said:

"This is your work, you stupid ape, and dearly shall you answer for it!"

"Oh, Master Pachi," cried Phil, "don't strike me, sir, I did not tell her. I loves Mistress Lavini with all my heart."

"Hold your tongue, you insolent rascal!" roared the lieutenant. "Only for you foolish servants your mistress would have been alive this minute."

This expression aroused the indignation of Annine in a

moment; and standing as erect as the Cardiff giant, her night-robe seemingly four inches shorter than ever before, she gave the lieutenant a piece of her mind, and no small piece either. The scene was novel indeed, and I suppose resembled Mark Antony's address to the Romans over the body of his beloved Cæsar. Phil Aggi had crouched back into the rear corridor, while Annine dropped again to her knees, and taking the hand that was rapidly growing cold, kissed it over and over again; finally laying it upon the bosom of Madame Lavini, she arose, and stepping into the apartment of her mistress, came back presently with a pillow, and raising the head and shoulders of Madame Lavini, placed the pillow under her and returned to her own room.

Lieutenant Pachi, who had seated himself upon the stairs leading to the mansard, had both hands over his eyes as if to hide from his vision the ghastly face of Madame Lavini, and trying very hard to collect his senses that he might act wisely in such a trying time and place. At last, satisfied with a plan of procedure that was in his mind, he arose, walked silently down the stairway, and directed the servants not to move the body of Madame Lavini until his return to the castle. Mounting his horse, he left with great haste for Naples. In his heart he did not know how on earth he could break the news of Madame Lavini's death to his father after his arrival home; but seeing no other alternative, resigned himself to the inevitable.

The gray light of early morn was fast appearing; the star in the eastern horizon was the only one left to flicker and go out. Lieutenant Pachi sighed deeply as he thought of the terrible calamities that had befallen one family in the few short hours which had elapsed. The mistress of Lavini Castle, a fond, loving, and indulgent mother, lying dead within its walls; a dear, kind, and affectionate father demented; and one of the fairest daughters the sun ever shone upon an outcast in the world.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

MARIE LAVINI had arrived at the home of Madame Baretti the night of the party at about the hour of seven in the evening, as prearranged with Mademoiselle Inez, as well as with Prof. Garcia. The drive from the castle was full of enjoyment, and more especially amusing after having caught General Pachi and his wife in their "public" embrace. Yet with Marie there was a consciousness of approaching danger, apparently. Joyous and happy to her companions, and anxious to conquer the many forebodings constantly arising in her mind, she could not for her life throw them off. Again and again she reasoned with herself what on earth it meant. She had the full permission of her parents to visit Naples, and could not see anything wrong in socially meeting the Professor at the home of her old schoolmate; yet something bothered and annoyed her so much that, on two occasions, Marie had requested her escort to arrange for an early return of the vehicle to the castle, saying that she feared her mother had met with a sudden relapse and that her presence was needed at home. Yet all these requests were laughed at by Inez, and finally Marie was induced to remain in Naples over the party, at least.

Shortly after their arrival at Madame Baretti's an impromptu luncheon was served, which was interrupted by the arrival of Prof. Garcia. After luncheon the ladies retired to the parlors, where they were soon joined by Madame Baretti and the handsome Professor. At the

request of all the ladies present, Prof. Garcia seated himself at the piano and beautifully rendered a few selections of Italian masters. During the time the Professor was at the piano guests were arriving, and very much to his surprise, upon looking around, he found the parlors well filled with ladies, who seemed to be enjoying the music.

Prof. Garcia had remained at the piano much longer than he had supposed. His mind was dazed with excitement, and all his calculations were there subjected and resubjected to the scrutiny of his own approval, finally terminating in the decision to invite Marie to walk out with him for the purpose, if possible, of winning her consent to leave home and friends and seek her fortune and happiness with him in foreign climes, taking due care not to mention any particular location until he had secured her consent to sail with him, and fairly determining that, should she absolutely refuse to accompany him, he would then resort to means calculated to forcibly carry out his devilish plans. Arising from the piano, Garcia walked leisurely by the window and, seeing that a storm was brewing, decided to hasten matters as much as possible, knowing that if the storm arose before leaving the house there would be no possible excuse for the evening's ramble. Consequently he hastily shook hands with a few of his friends, young Rebagliati among the rest, and stepping in front of Madame Baretti, who was engaged in conversation with her daughter and Marie, politely asked Marie to join him in a short stroll through the grounds, stating that he had discovered something decidedly new in the field of mineralogy and was desirous of explaining it in detail, at the same time asking Madame Baretti to pardon their absence for a little while.

Marie had arisen, and put forth her hand to meet that of

the Professor. As he took her hand and rolled his great dark eyes upon her smilingly, she shrank involuntarily from his grasp. A sudden sensation of fear passed over her, which she tried in vain to overcome.

"What can it be?" she reasoned again to herself. "Am I wrong in accepting this invitation to walk with the Professor? Why, no." She could not bring herself to believe that. Yet, as she stood in his very presence, every nerve in her body was on tension; she seemed almost upon the very edge of a precipice, with some unseen power pushing her slowly but surely over its rocky edge. Turning to Inez, she laughingly said:

"Will you not join us and take your first lesson in mineralogy? I assure you it is a most interesting study, one so full of variety and beauty."

While speaking, Marie had gradually walked to the door of the reception-room, and took from the table a wrap which she threw loosely around her shoulders. Inez begged to be excused, saying that it would not be exactly the proper thing for her to leave her guests, just as Marie caught the look of disapproval upon the Professor's face.

"Very well," answered Marie; "you will excuse us for a few moments, please."

"Certainly," answered Inez. "I most cordially hope your stroll will be an instructive one."

"You won't stay long, dear, will you?" asked Madame Baretti. "The wind is rising, and I fear a storm is brewing."

"Oh no," answered Marie and the Professor in concert, we shall soon return."

Would to God the poor girl could have seen the path that would bring her back, a most wretched child, in years to

come! But no, it could not be; she, like all others, must learn from the bitter lessons of experience the wilds and steeps of life, the devilish deceits and treacheries of mankind; she must learn that in the guise of honesty lurks the foulest treachery; that in the garb of purity is found the essence of depravity. And oh, what a lesson for a pure-minded girl to learn! Yet it is the self-same lesson that teaches the young mother who mourns the death of her innocent babe, in after-years to kneel in grateful recognition of the gentle hand that rescued her child from the awful experiences of life.

Out into the night went one of the fairest, purest girls the sun ever shone upon, entangled in the alluring meshes of a designing and deceitful man as her protector. For the last time on earth had this poor girl looked on the patient, loving face of her beloved mother. No more should she find peace, happiness, and contentment in the old castle that had sheltered her ancestors from the storms of life. It was all a thing of the past. The door that closed behind her, as she left the reception-room that night, closed out for years to come every ray of light that shone upon her pathway. All must be darkness and sadness. Hardly a day had passed that some of her young-lady acquaintances did not express their admiration for Garcia. To be sure, he was a married man; Marie was aware of this fact, yet she could not understand that there was any impropriety in having a dear friend, and especially one that had sought to educate and instruct her, even though he was married. She had looked upon Prof. Garcia as a dear, kind, handsome friend, and always felt happy to have his company, never thinking for a moment of him as being anything but a friend; yet she was proud of his attentions, and felt flattered

that he had instructed her in preference to any of her companions.

It was true that she had kissed him simply because he had asked her to do so, and she thought it would more firmly secure his friendship, but not with the slightest emotion or especial regard.

Prof. Garcia, with his keen perceptive faculties, had discerned all this, and had governed himself accordingly; never had he permitted an opportunity to pass that was at all calculated to promote his chances of crowding himself into the young girl's affections without taking advantage of the same. He would at times narrate hair-breadth escapes of his own, and spin off endless exposures that he had been subjected to, hoping to extract words of sympathy from the sweet young girl by his side; but in all these attempts he had been disappointed, and his sensational stories had simply brought forth expressions of surprise and wonderment from Marie. She looked upon him as her instructor; she was delighted at the liberty her parents had given her in entering society, and it was a novel idea, the association and friendship of some one more advanced in years than her school-day associates.

So soon as the Professor and Marie reached the garden they seated themselves in an arbor beside the walk that led to the public street; and the Professor, who was aware that he had but a limited time to consummate his plans, was of necessity compelled to be somewhat abrupt in his wooings.

"Marie," said the Professor, "do you know that my life

is very unhappy?"

"Unhappy, Professor? Isn't that too bad!" answered Marie. "Why, I am so happy all the time, I don't know how to sympathize with unhappy people. I should think

the science you are master of would make you very happy," answered Marie.

"Yes, it helps to drive away dull care; and only for my college I should die, I believe. I never have a moment's happiness at home. Madame Garcia has no desire for social acquaintances, and cares nothing for party gayeties, and the like; she is entirely too domestic in all her tastes to suit me. And, Marie, do you know that I have decided to leave Italy forever?"

"You don't mean to leave Italy and never return, do you?"

"Yes," answered the Professor, "I shall soon leave Italy and never return. There is but one person on earth, Marie, that prevents my going at once."

"And who is that, pray?" answered Marie, wonderingly.

"It is yourself, Marie. Never since the night of the party at Lavini Castle have I ceased thinking of you. Your sweet, calm face has been before me constantly. And now, my darling, I kneel and implore you to seek your fortune in another clime with me. O Marie, you must have seen how passionately I have loved you; and now I'ask, will you not leave Italy with me to be my wife? O Marie, do not refuse me! I beseech you to listen to my petitions."

"Stop!" cried Marie with firmness, as she loosened her hand from his, "not another word, Prof. Garcia. We have been friends together for some little time, and as friends we must part. Not for a moment had I supposed that your little attentions and loving protections were in the light of an admirer of mine. I have loved and respected you as a friend, Prof. Garcia, but there let our intimacies end. How, in the name of Heaven, can you so far forget

your relations in life as to make such a proposition as this to me?"

"O Marie, do not deal harshly with me, I pray you," pleaded the Professor. "My life is miserable; my wife does not love me, and my home is only a place of sorrows and dissensions. Have I not been kind to you, Marie? And would you let me go without one kind word and happy smile to cheer me in my exile?"

"Exile! Why, how strangely you talk, Professor," said Marie, with emotion. "One would think you were about to leave Italy to-night, and never return."

"And so I am," answered the Professor. "This night I leave Italy forever. No more shall we wander through the fields of Lavini lands, nor upon the sparkling shores of the little river. Marie, those happy, happy times are over for us; and perhaps, my darling, when I am gone from your midst, you will one day remember the sunny hours that we have spent together in innocent amusement. I love you, Marie, and shall never allow your bright, happy face to pass out of my memory. All I pray is that you may never live to know the pain I suffer in bidding you good-by forever."

As the Professor spoke these words he arose, and taking the hand of Marie, kissed it, and turned to the door of the arbor. Marie had not remained stoical during the conversation. He had cunningly aroused her sympathy in his behalf, seeing that unless he succeeded in interesting her enough in his departure to accompany him to the wharf from which he sailed, his prospects for securing her were fragile indeed. Striking a match and looking at his watch, he found that he had but half an hour before the vessel sailed from the wharf. A dense fog had settled over

the city, and the wind was moaning in the tree-tops. Turning to where Marie was seated, he took her hand once more in his and said:

"Marie, my darling, I have to ask as a last favor that you will accompany me to the wharf from whence I sail. As there are but a few moments left before I sail, I desire to make a confidant of you. I have provided financially for the care of Madame Garcia and the education of my little son" (here his voice faltered); "and as I have many things to speak about, will you kindly go with me to the wharf? and I shall arrange for one of the harbor officers to accompany you back to Madame Baretti's house. Do not refuse me this my last request; and when you have returned to Madame Baretti's you shall excuse my absence by saying that a local telegram of my wife's illness called me quickly home."

"I will go," answered Marie, with a sigh. "I suppose I should not venture out in such a night as this, but I will go, Professor. And will you not be persuaded to remain in Italy?"

"Not another day," responded the Professor. "I have patiently borne the insults and misjudgments of a woman who never loved me, and now I am decided once for all to leave Italy forever."

"What a cruel blow it will be to Madame Garcia!" said Marie. "Does she know you are so soon to leave Italy?"

"Yes, she knows it by this time. I was thoughtful enough to drop her a line to that effect."

"Oh, how cruel to leave her alone in the world with her little baby boy!"

"Yes, Marie, it is cruel, I admit; but what, in Heaven's name, can a man do situated as I am? In the first place,

there is not a compatible thing between us. 'Madame Garcia is bored with all my friends; my pleasures are her sorrows, my joy her pain. And so long as I financially protect her, she should be willing to dispense with the object of so much of her displeasure and unhappiness. But, Marie, I am forgetting myself; I have but a very few minutes in which to reach the wharf. My baggage is all cared for, and my stateroom secured. Oh, how can I bear it, to look no more into those soft, sweet eyes, and miss your merry laughter day by day! O Marie, if you but knew how I shall suffer this terrible loss, you would surely pity me."

The wind had arisen and howled dismally, and the fine misty rain was falling thick and fast. Marie had drawn the wrap closely about her shoulders, and taking the Professor's arm, clung closely to his side, as down the gravel walk they went arm-in-arm to the terrace steps. Oh, if some good angel had at that moment but gently whispered in her ear, "Thus far shalt though go and no farther," how much suffering, sorrow, and death might have been evaded! Down the old stone stairway she tripped gayly and unsuspiciously, little thinking that within an hour her poor old feeble father would slowly and tremblingly wend his way up the self-same stairway in search of her, and only to be carried back as unconscious of all surroundings as Marie was of all impending dangers. Down the Via passed the most wretched of men and his victim. Soon the red wharf-lights could be seen through the fog, and in another instant the great bellowing whistle sounded the first signal of departure.

<sup>&</sup>quot;What's that?" asked Marie.

<sup>&</sup>quot;It's the whistle of the steamer upon which I sail," answered the Professor.

"And why do they sound it now?" asked Marie.

The Professor, who was constantly on the alert, answered that it was only a salute to another passing vessel, not wishing to let her know that it was a signal of warning previous to departure, fearing that she might be so alarmed that he could not succeed in getting her aboard the vessel.

As soon as they reached the wharf everything was in confusion; great truck-loads of freight and baggage were passing to and fro, and passengers and seamen were busily engaged in arranging luggage and procuring tickets of transportation. Lights of different colors could be seen through the mist and rain, loud-shouting voices, mingled with the clanking of chains and escape of steam, rendered the night hideous. The Professor had stopped at the outside gate, presented his ticket, and asked that the lady in company with him might take a casual look at the beautiful steamship upon which he was to sail. Gaining the consent of the officers at the gate, he held tightly on to Marie's arm and pushed his way roughly through the crowd. Suddenly the great broadsides of the steamboat appeared before them, and through the haze it looked like a wall of solid masonry. Not a word was spoken; Marie was too much frightened to speak, and the scoundrel by her side had too nearly reached the consummation of his devilish plans to interrupt them by a single word.

Soon a voice was heard above the clang and clatter of the rest: "This way to the gang-plank."

"We shall soon be out of this fearful noise," said the Professor.

"I'm thankful for that," returned Marie; "I am so very much fatigued. Can we not rest a few moments?" she asked plaintively.

"Certainly, my dear," returned the Professor; "we shall be comfortably seated in the ship's cabin in a moment, and then I shall arrange that you may see my quarters before I sail."

Arriving at the gang-plank, he carefully released Marie's arm and gently assisted her in ascending the plank. Soon they were both seated in the ship's cabin, and the Professor excused himself, saying that he should first of all make arrangements for her return in safety to the house of Madame Baretti, after which he would secure the key of his stateroom, that she might at least get a glimpse of the quarters in which he should leave his native land forever.

No sooner had the rascal left the side of his victim than he registered the fictitious name of "Meonta Garcia Paralotti and wife" upon the ship's ledger, secured the key of his stateroom, and hastily returning to the cabin, assisted Marie up the hatchways to the upper deck. Taking the key from his pocket, he unlocked the door of his stateroom, and, with especial politeness, asked Marie to be seated within.

Expressing great anxiety as to the fatigue she had suffered, the Professor remarked that he had in his satchel a delicious brand of port-wine that had been presented to him by a friend as a farewell token of esteem and regard, and that he should be delighted to serve her with a glass of the same, believing it would refresh her very much. Marie expressed regrets at not being able to comply with either of his requests, and asked that she might be served with a glass of water. Quick as thought the Professor took from his satchel a drinking-cup, and throwing open the door of his stateroom, stepped across the gangway in sight of

Marie, and drew the water from the water-tank made fast to the ship's coping.

Marie drank down the water, and feeling quite rested, expressed a desire to visit the different parts of the ship. This was readily acquiesced in by the Professor, and after closing the door of the stateroom they started aft. Marie had not been long gone before she experienced a sensation of drowsiness, and expressed herself to the Professor as being so sleepy she could hardly keep awake. This was laughingly passed over by the Professor, and still they continued walking backward and forward through the great glistening cabins of the ship. Every moment seemed an age to Garcia, who was anxiously expecting the final signal of departure. At last, entirely overcome, Marie dropped leisurely down upon one of the long velvet sofas in the middle of the cabin, and Garcia seated himself in a low chair beside the large iron stay that seemed to support the hurricane deck above, close enough to Marie to carry on conversation in an ordinary tone, yet far enough away to appreciate the beautiful picture before him. Never in all his acquaintance with this beautiful girl had she looked so bewitchingly beautiful as at this very moment. There she sat, with those large dreamy eyes half closed, and great locks of raven-black hair carelessly strewn about her shoulders. Marie had that night dressed herself in a bodice of cardinal silk with skirts of black satin, heavily pleated. Around her neck hung gracefully a necklace of Egyptian beads, attached to which was a little gold locket bearing the faces of her father and mother. Upon her slender hand sparkled a little cross of rubies and diamonds, the birthday gift of her beloved father; and thus, half awake, she lay upon the sofa. Her sweet, patient face and confiding smile would have turned a heart of stone against doing aught that would disturb her happy, innocent life. Her lips half open, as if in prayerful conference with her angel guardian to protect and guard her from all harm. Oh, to what base uses can the mind of man be put, to seek to destroy the happiness of such a life as this! And yet there sat her would-be destroyer gloating over her. Marie had from time to time muttered a few disconnected sentences, but at last fell asleep.

Garcia lighted a cigar, and was puffing away as leisurely as though nothing annoyed him, when suddenly the ship's shrill whistle sounded and Marie jumped to her feet. The whole ship seemed to vibrate in accordance with the sound. Marie quickly brushed the dark wavy hair from her face and gazed wildly about her.

"What's that?" she asked excitedly.

"It is nothing, Marie," returned the Professor, "but our ship signalling a passing craft."

"Well," answered Marie, dropping back upon the sofa and drawing out her words, "I have been asleep in the cabin—you will excuse—" And here she stopped speaking; she was asleep again.

The great machinery of the ship was just beginning to move, and out from its moorings floated the monster ship into the sea.

Prof. Garcia walked up the hatchway to look at the night. The wind was blowing dismally, and the rain came down in sheets upon the deck. Garcia watched the foglights on the shore one by one disappear, and finally turned backward with a shudder, and descended to the cabin. Marie was quietly sleeping. Garcia stepped across the gangway, unlocked the door of his stateroom, and

quietly arranging the lower berth, stole softly to the side of the gentle sleeper, and cautiously raising her in his arms, laid her in the berth. Closing the door, he turned the key in the lock and disappeared.

Marie was asleep; yes, truly asleep, with none save her guardian angel as her protector. She had not seen the powerful drug the wretched deceiver had placed in the cup before he gave her the water to quench her thirst. And so she sleeps, while her poor father's heart is breaking. So she sleeps, while her beloved mother breathes out her soul to God.

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

MARIE LAVINI awoke from her unnatural slumber shortly after midnight, and gazing about her, tried for some time to recognize her surroundings. All was utter darkness. She felt the jar of the great machinery of the ship, and heard the splashing of water against the cabin windows. It was, however, some time before she regained sufficient consciousness to be aware of her predicament. But shortly the awful realization of her position dawned upon her, and springing to her feet, she seized the edge of the berth with one hand and the latchings of the cabin door with the other; pulling desperately at the latchings, she found the cabin securely fastened. The ship was lurching to and fro, and it was with great difficulty Marie kept her feet. What on earth to do she did not know. The thoughts of home and friends passed through her mind, and in despair she sank to her knees, still tightly clutching the edge of the lower berth, and with upturned face she prayed to God to spare her from disgrace, to protect her from injury, and to return her to her home and parents in safety. By degrees the wretched designs of her abductor dawned upon her, and now she fully appreciated the character of his devilish, artful deceptions. Every muscle of her frame quivered with indignation. Before his plans should be carried out, she had decided that death should be her rescuer; and wildly pulling at the door for liberty, she found herself foiled in every attempt. Turning, she pushed aside the lattice of the cabin

window, and peering out into the darkness, shuddered at the awful scene. The great ship rose mountain-high, and again pitched headlong into the watery abyss; the angry waters dashed against the window-pane, and the cries of the seaman aloft sounded like petitions from the infernal regions. Oh, how the heart of this poor girl sank within her! It seemed that she was hedged in upon all sides, and must be disappointed in all attempts to regain her freedom. Her first impulse was to scream out in despair; but reflecting for a moment, she decided that such an action would only serve to make her dejected condition known to all. And well she knew the rascal Garcia had prepared himself with a feasible story to the officers of the ship in accounting for her presence on board. As quick as thought she pushed the bolt on the inside of the cabin door.

"Now," she said to herself, "I am alone; and if I cannot enjoy my liberty, I shall at least be alone in my confinement." Kneeling once more, she prayed for help and rescue; and while thus employed her eyes caught the rays of lamplight shining through the lattice beneath the lower berth. Instantly she threw herself upon the floor, and drawing her body under the berth, she discovered the lattice to be fastened by two thumb-screws at either end; quickly loosening the lattice, with an almost superhuman effort she dragged herself through the opening and was free. Jumping to her feet, she ran up the hatchway to the hurricane deck, and groping her way amongst the great black smoke-stacks and greasy machinery, she found scanty shelter from the storm.

The wind howled dismally overhead, and the rain came down in sheets upon the deck. Out of the mouths of the

smoke-stacks came a blast of fire and smoke, and the gigantic iron arms of the ship's machinery plunged downward as if about to reach the bottom of the sea. There stood the trembling form of Marie Lavini, her long black hair flying loosely in the wind, and her pearl-white hands clutching tightly one of the iron stays of the stacks. Firmly had she resolved that before she would become the victim of Garcia's foul conspiracy, the sea should be her restingplace.

She had no conceivable idea of how many hours the ship would be en route. Eagerly she watched for the appearance of land lights on the eastern coast of the sea, and she had firmly determined to leave the ship at the Straits, telegraph to Naples of her whereabouts, and return at once to her home. While thus engaged in thought, Marie was startled by the sound of approaching voices. Looking in the direction from whence the sound came, nothing could be seen; still, voices could be heard growing gradually more distinct. Marie recognized the voice of her deceiver. Her first impulse was to fly to the extreme end of the hurricane deck, but better judgment invited her to listen and possibly she might learn something to her advantage. Louder and louder came the voices, and suddenly a light was seen shining upon the ship's stays. Marie crouched backward to more perfectly obscure her form. Soon she heard the words, "She is my wife; and although the poor creature is demented, I take her abroad at the advice of physicians."

"O my God!" moaned Marie, as she heard these fatal words. Well she knew now that, under the impressions Garcia had left with the ship's officers, she would have only that recognition given to an insane person should she be captured, and that the story of her abduction would receive no credence.

For a moment she seemed paralyzed with fear, but, regaining her self-possession, she watched the approaching light and saw that Garcia was in company with one of the ship's officers. They had come on deck, travelled aft, and searched every nook and corner, and now they were approaching her. Marie first decided to pass down the hatchway and re-enter the cabin; but seeing another officer standing at the entrance with a light, she found all exit closed to her save the deep, dark waters of the sea. Shrinking backward, half reeling, she seized the port light guard-rail and clutched it with a deathlike grip. Stealthily crawling along the deck on hands and knees, she reached the bowsprit stay, and kneeling there, the poor girl clasped her cold hands together and held them up to heaven. Oh! such a prayer as passed her lips that night would melt a heart of stone. There she knelt, defiantly protecting her virtue, with death staring her in the face and a prowling devil seeking her destruction. Suddenly came the shrill voice of the seaman, "I see her kneeling at the bowsprit stay." At these words, Marie decided that the sea should be her resting-place, and in its dark waters she would seek protection from shame.

She saw in an instant the smiling face of her darling mother, and out of the depths of the sea came her father's hand to greet her. "Seize her, seize her!" cried the seaman, and the moaning winds brought the dismal message to the ears of the fainting girl. Marie stood erect, and turning her pallid face upon that of her destroyer's, she took "a leap for death."

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

GARCIA and the officers rushed down the hatchway to the deck below and sounded the alarm of "Man overboard." Soon the clanging of gongs and rattling of chains were heard, and the motion of the ship's machinery ceased; a clear, shrill voice sounded throughout the ship, "Lower the boats," and in compliance with the command the small boats were speedily lowered, filled with seamen, and a sharp lookout was ordered. Garcia stood in the lower gangway, screaming to the seamen in the small boats "for God's sake to save his wife." The motion of the ship had been reversed, and it was now travelling slowly backwards, protecting the small boats from the sea and storm as much as possible. Garcia seemed irreconcilable, and every moment insisted upon following his poor wife to her watery grave. By the aid of the officers he was finally prevailed upon to retire to his cabin quarters, and was placed in charge of the ship's physician.

The search continued for nearly an hour, and the storm still raged ferociously; the great ship lurched under the terrible storm, and the seas washed over her decks from time to time.

Garcia had removed his clothing, and was rolling and tossing upon the lower berth of the cabin. Beside him sat the ship's physician, striving in vain to quiet his patient. Garcia had requested brandy at intervals of five minutes or less, and the doctor had complied with his request, until he found him momentarily passing from under his control.

Following every swallow of brandy he would pass into a semi-unconscious state; yet all the time muttering and groaning. Now and then the physician could catch a few words from his lips, such as "Lost her! lost her!" and then he would rise up and gaze wildly about him as if he knew nothing of his surroundings. "Where am I?" he would shout, and sink back upon the berth to begin his mutterings once more.

Curses of the most awful character came from the lips of the desperate man. After months of planning and scheming to secure his victim, he found himself foiled in his dastardly enterprise at a time when he thought himself most secure. Then it was that remorse seized upon him; and as he thought of the cruelty he had inflicted upon his poor wife and deserted boy, he became hourly more and more desperate. Thinking to drown his misery and stop the gnawing of his conscience, he had ordered brandy. Yet he found no solace in it. The only fact that served to give him the slightest peace of mind was that Marie Lavini might possibly be rescued from her watery grave. As his mind hit upon this happy thought, stupid with excessive drink, he fell into a deep sleep.

The small boats had returned to the ship with no tidings of the lost lady. The captain had ordered the ship to proceed again upon her course, and once more the great machinery was in motion. Men, women, and children had waited in breathless anxiety to hear from the crews of the returning boats, and when it was reported that the lady was lost, a feeling best known to those who have passed through such an experience was extant in the ship. Silent prayers rested upon the lips of all on board for the poor insane creature who was thus quickly snatched from life. Little

groups of passengers were gathered here and there upon the ship, discussing the terrible accident.

The captain had summoned to his state-room the first and second officers, and arrangements were made to find out in detail the name of the lady from the ship's register, and then, if thought best by the physician, to question her husband regarding the sad affair. As there was no positive clue to the true facts in the case, and as the regulations of the steamship service required that all accidents to life and property should be reported at the first landing, no time could be lost. The captain directed the officers, first of all, to make inquiries throughout the ship in a casual manner, and ascertain whether the unfortunate woman had any friends or relations aboard save her now half-demented husband. In accordance with this request the officers made diligent inquiry, all to no avail. The captain had in the mean time inspected the ship's register, and found written upon it "Meonta Garcia Paralotti and wife, section D, bound for London." Sending one of the officers to section D to make some inquiry of the physician as to the patient, the captain drew from his writing-desk a long slip of paper bearing a deep black edge, and printed upon which were the words "Lost at sea."

Removing the pen from the rack, the captain wrote the name of "Madame Meonta Garcia Paralotti, section D, bound for London." This was all he could write until the return of the officer with her age, place of birth, date of death, and where last seen on board the ship. The captain waited patiently for further developments. Drawing a cigar from his waistcoat pocket, he seated himself in an easy-chair beside the cabin door, and tipping his chair back against the casement, lighted his cigar and closed his eyes,

thinking that he might rest from the fatigues of the awful night. The ship was ploughing along at an increased speed; the wind had somewhat abated, yet the angry waters were tossing mountain-high. The captain had unconsciously dropped the unfinished part of his cigar from his mouth and was sleeping, when the officer he had dispatched to section D burst open the door and excitedly exclaimed:

"Captain, we have a madman on deck! We must have assistance at once; he is prowling about the ship half clad, and may do violence to some one."

The captain jumped to his feet, rubbed his eyes, and hurriedly asked who the man was. Being informed that it was the husband of the lost woman, he seized his trumpet and, rushing aft, delivered an order to the bridge watch to send seamen to the deck below. Instantly the order was repeated by the watch, and the men were upon deck. Garcia was seized by two stout seamen and carried to the state-room and placed upon the berth. Loudly did he remonstrate and demand his liberty. The ship's physician deemed it advisable to place him at once under the influence of an opiate. Consequently an injection of morphine was placed in his arm, and soon he was asleep.

Beside him sat the physician, closely watching his patient and from time to time taking the rate of his pulse.

The lights upon the eastern coast were not yet visible; the storm had spent its fury, and the stars shone out here and there behind the great black clouds, as if peeking at the world and dodging out of sight again.

The captain could ascertain nothing pertaining to the lost woman's name or parentage, save the fact of the registration of their names upon the ship's ledger; he had therefore decided to report at Gibraltar only the fact of

Madame Meonta Garcia Paralotti's having been lost overboard. After fully explaining the circumstances of her husband's critical condition, he promised to fully report the facts of the case, upon the recovery of Meonta Paralotti. After making a full written statement to this effect, the captain folded the paper and placed it in an envelope one corner of which was in black. This envelope bore the printed directions of the steamship company in Naples, and was to be left at Gibraltar for the returning steamship to carry back.

One by one the storm-clouds broke away and the howling of the wind had almost entirely ceased. The ship was in quiet waters, and floated along like a huge phantom in the night. It was an hour past her arriving time at Point Lookout, and she had yet another hour to travel before reaching there.

The search for the missing body, and the rough water, had delayed her. The captain had gone to the hurricane deck, and was conversing with the starboard watch as to the fearful night they had passed, and the loss of the poor insane person, when he was called by the mate and informed that the ship's physician desired to speak with him.

The captain returned to the cabin, where he was told by the second officer that the lady's husband had awoke and seemed to be partially rational, though terribly prostrated. The captain proceeded to the state-room, knocked gently upon the door, which was ajar, and stepped in.

Garcia opened his great, dark eyes and rolled them upon the captain. Raising himself upon his elbow, he seized hold of the lapel of the captain's coat and, drawing his head closely to his own, whispered in his ear:

"On yonder hillside"—and he pointed his trembling finger

and stared wildly through the cabin window into the night
—"On yonder hillside—beneath the fig-tree shade, there
dwell a lonely woman and a little boy. There are my home,
my wife, my child. Oh, save her! save her!" cried the
wretched man, as he sank back unconscious upon the
pillows.

- "Poor man! his mind is wandering," said the captain.
- "Yes," returned the physician, "he thinks he is on land. All night long his mutterings have been about his home, and frequently he would cry out, 'Agnes, Agnes! save me, save me!"
- "That must be the name of his poor unfortunate wife, lost overboard to-night," said the captain.
  - "Yes," answered the physician.

How little they knew the perfect truth of their surmise! Yes, it was the name of his poor wife; and sure enough, she had been cast overboard into a sea of trouble.

The early morning light was fast breaking over the horizon, and soon the sun shone out in all its radiant splendor. The air was cool and bracing, and the water as smooth as the surface of a mirror. At an early hour it was noised about, and generally known by all on board, that during the night a lady was lost overboard, and that her husband was in a very critical condition, suffering from the shock. Opinions were freely passed and discussions entered into by the various passengers of the ship, as to how it happened and the like.

The occurrence seemed to cast a shade of gloom over the entire ship; almost hourly some one stood at section D, making inquiry as to the condition of Paralotti, and the answer from the physician was evasive indeed. Day after day and night after night he murmured and muttered, and

only occasionally aroused enough to ask for brandy, beef tea, or water.

The gravest anxiety was felt on the part of the physician, fearing that his patient would develop a brain disease and finally succumb to the shock his system had sustained.

On the morning of the fifth day out, at about the hour of three, Garcia awoke and, rising up in bed, asked the nurse if she would call his wife to his bedside. He looked so wild, the nurse became frightened and called the physician; but before he arrived, Garcia had relapsed into unconsciousness and was again muttering and moaning.

The lights on both sides of the narrows were now plainly visible to the naked eye, and the sentinel-guns at the military headquarters had just sounded reveille as the ship passed the fort.

Only a few hundred feet and the great floating ship, for the first time since her departure from Naples, would be made fast to her moorings.

The whole ship was in confusion, passengers securing their parcels, and baggagemen running to and fro, answering questions. The seamen had their lines in readiness, and the gangways were cleared and gang-planks ready to push out upon the wharf. Small boats in profusion, were scattered about the dockage, and a few fishermen were seen along the shores. The harsh whistle of the ship sound, the signal for the port, and soon the ship was fast at the dockage. The cabin passengers bound for Gibraltar had congregated in the hatchway; and as soon as the gangplanks were dropped upon the dock, the passengers made speedy exit from the ship. One by one they passed along, until the hatchways were vacated and the cabin passengers all on the dock. The captain, who stood beside the gang-

plank, took from his pocket a bunch of keys and directed the second officer to unlock the gates for the steerage passengers. The gates were unlocked, and out from under the greasy machinery came a long line of miserable humanity, some half clad, others bearing the unmistakable marks of hunger and exposure, while many came hobbling along, too weak and sick to bear the weight of their own frail bodies. Last of all came an old man with silver hair and unsteady footsteps, supporting, as best he could, the trembling, shivering form of a woman. A greasy green wrap was thrown about her head and shoulders, and tattered garments hung loosely about her scanty form. Just as the old man stepped upon the gang-plank, the captain shouted to the postman to stop a moment until he should hand him a report of the woman lost overboard. The woman clung closely to the old man's side.

"A woman lost!" asked the postman, excitedly. "What name?"

"Madame Meonta Garcia Paralotti, from Naples," answered the captain.

At this very moment Marie Lavini stepped upon the dock in safety.

## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

Marie Lavini had jumped, as she supposed, into the sea, but when she regained consciousness found herself in the arms of a burly Italian, who was carrying her down the steerage hatchway. Behind her came an old man bewailing her misfortune, and pleading that she might be gently handled till something was known of the accident. Marie had landed in a coil of rope on the deck below, and had been seen by two steerage passengers, who had carefully raised her from the rope and carried her into the filthy quarters of the steerage passengers, and here the poor girl had found refuge for five days and nights. As soon as she had fully recovered consciousness, and appreciated that she was safe, she asked as a favor that her presence should not be made known to the officers of the ship; and so it was that she reached Gibraltar in safety.

The only escort Marie Lavini had as she left the ship was the old Italian who had watched over her and ministered to her every want. Yet she did not even know his name, nor had she dared to tell her own. The old man had told Marie that he was a gardener for a wealthy family down the coast but a few miles, and that he felt almost positive that if she would accompany him the family would employ her at once as a maid in the household.

Marie had only partially listened to the old man's proposition, as her mind was in another part of the world. She had resolved to arrange for immediate passage back to Naples, and had requested the old gentleman to kindly

wait a moment till she could learn something about the arrival of another vessel bound for home. Marie opened the door of the ticket-office upon the dock and entered. Stepping up to the desk, she inquired of the agent the quickest way of reaching Naples.

"Reaching Naples, did you say?" returned the agent.

"Yes, sir," answered Marie, who had thrown the old gray cape from her head and whose beautiful face attracted the immediate attention of the occupants of the office.

"The quickest way," answered the agent, "is by rail to Nismas, thence by ferry across the river Rhone, again by rail down the coast to Naples."

"How many hours in transit?" asked Marie.

"About seventy-five," answered the agent.

"At what hour does the train depart?"

"At five this evening," returned the agent.

Marie was about to ask regarding the expense, when the old gentleman, her companion, rapped upon the door. Marie stepped quickly to the door, and the old man stood pointing his finger at the departing ship. Oh, what a load was lifted from the poor girl's heart as that ship passed down the straits bearing the half-unconscious body of her would-be destroyer!

"Thank God! thank God!" she muttered to herself, "I am free at last. Though he believes me dead, I still live, and one day he shall see my face, when every feature shall torment him, every line of it haunt him, and bring back memories that will bow down his wicked heart."

As she stood watching the ship's departure, these bitter thoughts were passing through her mind, and scalding tears were streaming down her cheeks. Oh, what a hatred had been born within her for that wicked man! Every attenshe despised every recollection pertaining to her acquaintance with him. Oh, how bitterly did she regret that she had ever seen his wretched face! Offended virtue knows no bounds to hatred against the offender of it. Marie Lavini never looked more beautiful than at this very moment. An expression of satisfaction, intermingled with that of determination, rested upon her beautiful, snowwhite face. Yes; she was satisfied that she was free from the designs of a wicked man, and determined that the day should come when she would avenge her wrongs.

The ship had passed from view, and Marie, who wished to still further question the agent regarding expenses of transportation to Naples, pushed open the office door and directed her aged companion to enter and be seated in the waiting-room.

The old man stepped inside and seated himself in one corner of the room, and began tugging away at a knot in a large red handkerchief, while Marie made further inquiry regarding her passage home. After all questions had been satisfactorily answered, Marie turned and smiled as she looked upon the breakfast meal the old man had spread out upon his handkerchief. There were biscuits and cakes artistically arranged, with small bits of cheese high mounted upon the cakes. The old man had arranged a seat for Marie at one end of the "lay-out," and made everything look as inviting as he could. Marie was hungry indeed; the pure morning air had sharpened her appetite, and she sat down beside her companion.

Oh, what a scene was this! Marie Lavini, an accomplished, beautiful woman, used to all that wealth and culture could shower upon her, by force of circumstances

called upon to share a beggar's meal! Yet this did not worry her; she could almost kiss the wrinkled, care-worn face of the dear old man beside her, when she thought of his kindness to her, always by her side, since the night she was taken to the steerage quarters.

Quickly had the old man perceived that this young woman was not from the ordinary walks of life. Anxiously did he await developments pertaining to her strange appearance on board the ship.

As Marie Lavini seated herself to partake of the morning meal, the old man arose, about to leave her, when she requested that he should remain seated, for she wished to make known to him something of importance regarding herself. Marie Lavini had decided to borrow funds sufficient to pay her return passage to Naples, and felt assured that her jewels were of sufficient value to realize at least an adequate sum for this purpose. She could not bear to leave this kind old man without a knowledge of whom he had befriended, nor without recompense for his faithful services. Therefore she had decided to tell him who she was; but first of all she would exact from his lips a pledge that he should never divulge the knowledge that he possessed to any one living.

So Marie proceeded in a guarded manner to make known her station in life. From time to time she was filled with emotion, and would cease speaking. The old man sat with eyes cast down, and tears filled the furrows of his wrinkled face. She told the story of her misfortunes from beginning to end, and last of all she spoke her name. No sooner had the words crossed her lips than the old man's face turned pale as death. His hands trembled as he dropped the

morsel of food from his fingers, and raising his cold, gray eyes to meet those of his young companion, he asked:

- "Was Lavini Castle your home? Was Signor Lavini your father?"
- "Yes; did you ever hear of him? Did you know him?" asked Marie, plaintively, as she burst into tears and stretched both hands out wistfully.
- "Did you have a man-servant in your family named Phil Aggi?" asked the old man, trembling.
- "Yes," answered Marie; "did you know him?" But before she had finished speaking, the old man had buried his face in his hands and wept aloud.

Marie was filled with wonderment at the strange interest her aged companion had taken in her misfortunes, and was about to ask again if he knew of her father, when the old man wiped the tears from his eyes and said:

- "Yes, Mademoiselle Marie Lavini, I have held you on my knee in years gone by, and fondled your silken curls, and heard your merry laughter hour by hour. I am Phil Aggi's father, Mademoiselle," said the old man, "and well do I remember the morning you were born as if it were yesterday. It was the coldest, brightest, clearest day I ever saw in Italy. It had rained the night before, and upon all the trees around the mansion hung little frozen rain-drops that sparkled in the morning sun and looked like diamonds. I was Signor Lavini's servant then."
  - "Was your name Paleppi?" asked Marie, with emotion.
- "Yes, that's it," answered the dear old man. "Paleppi Aggi was my name, and it is still the same. There was an old fig-tree down beside the fountain where the gardenwalks met. Mademoiselle Marie, do you remember that?" asked the old man, tearfully.

- "Yes," answered Marie, so full of delight at every word that fell from the old man's lips.
- "Around the base of that old tree, some twenty years ago, these trembling hands built a little rustic bench. I wonder if it still is there."
  - "Yes, it is there," answered Marie, quickly.
- "Well, there it was, upon a bright June morning, I first saw your little face. You were in your mother's arms, Mademoiselle, safe from all the wicked, deceitful schemes of life; safe from the angry winds and storms of existence that have since visited your fair brow."

Oh, what a shelter must be a mother's arm! What a refuge from the vice and wickedness of the world must be a mother's loving, watchful care and helping hand! To those who know such blessings in their childhood, let them never seek for them again in after-years, for, no matter how untiring their efforts, how patiently they search, or how diligently they may look for such protection, it is not to be found from under the maternal roof.

The old man had finished speaking, and Marie had arisen and, taking both his hands in hers, begged of him to accompany her back to her home, where she promised him every comfort and happiness to the end of his days. At this moment the door of the ticket-office was thrown open and the postman dropped a newspaper upon the floor. Marie had partially gained the consent of Paleppi Aggi to accompany her back to Naples, and the conversation had lapsed into that of inquiry upon the part of Paleppi Aggi as to the health of her mother, and what changes had taken place in and around the mansion. The ticket-agent came from behind the railing and, stooping over, took the paper from the floor, at the same time remarking to some

one oack of the railing that he wondered what new developments there were in the case of the Naples elopement.

"What elopement is that?" asked a voice from behind the railing.

"Why, have you not read of the elopement of Signor Lavini's daughter with a married professor of the university? The girl's mother is dead, and the father, Signor Lavini, is a raving maniac."

"Stop!" shrieked Marie, as she wildly rushed toward the speaker and tore the paper from his grasp. "Signor Lavini a maniac, and Madame Lavini dead! Then, Palippi Aggi, we shall never see Lavini Castle again!"

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## CHAPTER NINTH.

Norhing eventful occurred after the ship left Gibraltar until her arrival in London. Garcia kept his bed for several days, but finally was allowed to go on deck two hours each day. He was even yet delirious at times, and refused to converse upon the subject of the loss of his wife. He would sit alone for hours, engaged in a low muttering conversation, and would rouse up if spoken to by any one, and seem quite bright and rational; yet he looked haggard and care-worn. Truly was it said, "The way of the transgressor is hard." This man had already suffered as much as it would seem possible for any man to bear, yet his sufferings had only just begun. He was doomed to suffer till the end of his life; no sooner would he close his eyes at night than the haggard face of Marie Lavini would appear to him as out of the confines of the deep, praying for succor which he could not give. Her gentle voice rang in his ears by day and by night. Then again the remembrances of his home, his wife, and his child would torment him. Oh, how he suffered, and how he longed to get off the ship and see new faces and have new surroundings!

Garcia had become so changed in appearance that he hardly recognized his own face in the mirror. He had been on deck one afternoon when the captain called his attention to a little island close to the main shore. "That," said the captain, "is the Isle of Wight, and we have only five hours now till we reach the city of London."

"Do you mean that?" asked Garcia.

"Certainly," said the captain. "I have no desire to mislead you."

But Garcia had jumped quickly to his feet, and was soon in his cabin, preparing for his arrival in port.

All the correspondence that had existed between his friend Prof. Marion Wood, of London, and himself had given the former the right to believe that Madame Garcia was to accompany her husband; yet this could be easily explained away. Garcia had decided to inform Prof. Wood that his wife had suddenly died, and that her death had been a great shock to his nervous system.

At seven in the evening the ship made landing, and Prof. Wood was in waiting upon the dock.

As Garcia stepped from the gang-plank Wood recognized him instantly, and put out his hand, which was met by that of Garcia. Wood shook the hand of Garcia heartily, and laughingly said: "Glad to see you, old fellow; it's been many a day since we looked into each other's faces. You're well, I hope?"

"No, Wood, I am anything but well. But three days previous to my departure for England, I lost my wife suddenly, and it had almost killed me. In fact, I seem to have but little energy in the direction of—"

"Careful, careful," whispered Wood; "no mention of our enterprise must ever cross our lips in public places. Let'us understand, at this early moment in our associations, the keenest manipulation on our part can only insure success in this hazardous enterprise. You cannot imagine, my dear fellow, how much I pity you in your sad bereavement. I wonder you did not cable me. Garcia, you must have known I was interested in all your fortunes."

"Yes, I suppose I should have cabled the death of my

beloved wife. But you know how totally unable one is at such a time to remember their duty to others. Reason seems to disappear from a mind full of sorrow; at least it is so with me."

The two gentlemen had entered the Professor's carriage, and were soon leaving the steamship wharf en route for his residence. The carriage at last stopped in front of a low stone structure with small windows and great stone pillars, supporting narrow-roofed verandas. Prof. Wood alighted, and assisted his friend to the doorway of the residence, where stood a very aged gentleman in knickerbocker attire, his hat in his hand, and at the extreme end of the veranda two young ladies were swinging to and fro in the hammock. Garcia's dark, searching eyes had been fixed upon the ladies in the hammock, even before the carriage had stopped. As he reached the veranda, Prof. Wood introduced him to his father, and all three gentlemen passed into the house. Prof. Wood soon returned to the veranda, having left Garcia in conversation with his father.

"Now, my daughters," said the Professor, "I shall shortly introduce to you my old friend and schoolmate, Prof. Garcia Paralotti. You doubtless remember my having spoken to you about his coming. Paralotti has an idea that in the immediate vicinity of London City he shall find valuable quartz. The idea, to me, is simply ridiculous; but he still insists that he shall discover property of great value. We are to go prospecting in the near future, or as soon, at least, as Garcia's delicate health will permit. I came also to acquaint you with the fact that his wife has just died, three days previous to his sailing for England, and that his sufferings of mind have almost entirely prostrated him. You will therefore, my dear

daughters, be governed by circumstances in your gayeties."

"Certainly, father," answered the young ladies in concert. "But isn't he awfully handsome?"

"To be sure. He is as bright in mind as in feature," answered the father. "But I must return and acquaint your mother with the fact of his arrival."

Prof. Wood had closed the door behind him, when Rhea, the elder daughter, a tall, handsome girl, with face as fair as a lily, and whose dark blue eyes snapped and sparkled with delight at the news she possessed of her father's friend, jumped from the hammock, gathered a mass of golden hair from her shoulders, twisted it in a knot, and hurriedly and carelessly arranged her clothing, at the same time commenting upon the handsome face of the foreigner. Rhea's sister was younger than herself, but in reality looked five years her senior. She was short in stature, quite fleshy, with dark deep-set eyes and florid skin, that gave her the appearance of a Spanish lady; in fact she was somewhat Spanish. Glasis resembled her mother in looks and temperament, of a subdued nature, but quick to anger, and thoroughly sincere in all her doings; while Rhea was entirely the opposite—gay, outspoken, and always ready for any enterprise no matter how indiscreet, if plenty of happiness was promised in the beginning of it. Rhea had many admirers in London, though her school-life had only just closed. Her careless, indifferent manner, and cosmopolitan way of greeting friends and strangers alike, had made her especially popular among her assosiates. She was tall, graceful, and handsome, with ways and manners that were winning and attractive, especially to the opposite sex; while Glasis was retiring and sedate both in manner and conversation. It had been generally remarked that it was very strange how two dispositions so diametrically opposite in every particular could get along with so much harmony and so little discord.

Glasis from her very childhood had displayed a wonderful degree of tact and judgment in selecting the company she kept. Though she expressed herself highly pleased with the face of Paralotti, she reserved her indorsement of his character until she should have a more extended acquaint-ance with him.

The young ladies had entered the reception-room and been introduced to the foreigner, who spoke English with an accent not at all disagreeable; on the contrary, it was quite pleasant to hear. Rhea was gushing in her manner, and her words of sympathy to Garcia regarding the death of his wife were spoken with a broad grin upon her face, which, in spite of every effort upon her part to suppress, rendered it all the more plainly visible.

Glasis had taken the hand of the Professor in a cold, dignified manner, and looked into his eyes as a mariner's gaze would penetrate a fog for some hidden danger. She also had expressed her sorrow for him in his troubles, and she meant it too; yet a feeling of relief came over her as she passed out of his presence. Mrs. Wood had joined her husband and his friend in the drawing-room, and after expressing her sorrow for his bereavement, and spending a few moments in conversation, supper was announced and served.

Glasis had excused herself from the table and passed into the drawing-room in advance of the rest of the family. She had seated herself at the piano, and was singing a few old familiar airs; among them was that blessed old song, yet always new, "Home, sweet home." Garcia's thoughts returned to the house upon the hillside. The sweet, calm face of his angel wife and the soft, innocent eyes of his little deserted boy were immovably fixed before him. He shuddered as he thought of his devilish doings, and truly did he pity himself for what he must suffer until the icy hand of death closed out his life. Placing his hand on the shoulders of Prof. Wood, who sat beside him, he said:

"You will pardon my ill-mannered request, but that music is torturing me. There are so many recollections in it, that I am too feeble to endure the thoughts it brings up."

Glasis heard only the first part of the remark, and jumping to her feet, left the room with an air of indignation. From that very moment she despised Garcia, and took no pains to disguise her feelings. Her parents sought to explain matters, but all their explanations only served to more firmly fix the spirit of hatred in her heart. She despised him, and looked upon his remark as a studied insult.

Rhea excused herself, and followed her sister into the library. Glasis sat beside the window, too full of hatred and indignation to observe the coming of her sister.

- "Glasis, isn't he perfectly exquisite?" said Rhea, full of anxiety.
  - "No. I hate him," said Glasis, emphatically.
  - "Hate hin ?" said Rhea.
- "Yes, I hate him," said Glasis. "And I shall take the first opportunity of expressing my hatred to him."
- "Then, Glasis, you shall take the first opportunity of making a consummate fool of yourself," said Rhea.
  - "Indeed?" said Glasis, drawing out the word. "Why,

I am amazed at the interest you seem to have in a stran-

ger," said Glasis, sarcastically.

"You quite mistake my meaning, sister," said Rhea. "I have no special interest in Garcia. But I must say your expressions of hatred in the midst of his sorrow and bereavement seemed harsh indeed to me. Besides, I wonder you should hate a person that you know so little about."

"I know enough of this man," said Glasis, emphatically.

- "Why, what do you know so dreadful?" said Rhea.
- "I know that he is little used to good manners," returned Glasis.
  - "I have not discovered it," said Rhea, smilingly.
- "Of course not," returned Glasis, sarcastically. "You can see nothing but perfection in this man from Italy."
- "One thing certain," continued Glasis: "had I given my affections to one man and promised to become his wife, as you have, Rhea Wood, I should not so quickly fall in love with every foreigner that happens to land upon our shores."
- "Why, Glasis, you are angry!" Before the sentence was finished Glasis had passed out of the library and, closing the door with a slam, rushed up the stairway to her chamber.

For the first time on earth, Rhea and Glasis Wood retired that night without kneeling and praying in concert for the good health, happiness, and comfort of their parents, friends, and benefactors.

Garcia and Wood remained in the drawing-room long after the other members of the family had retired; and here it was that Garcia received in detail the arrangements so artfully carried out by his associate. Wood informed him that he had selected a desolate spot near London formerly owned by Sir Humphrey Hall, a nobleman,

known as Buena Vista, for the manufacture of spurious coin, and that he had commenced negotiations with one of his former pupils, Mr. Erold Trollup, whose parents now lived upon the very spot selected for the work.

"I think," said Wood, whispering in the ear of his confederate, "by good management, Garcia, we can induce young Trollup to join us in this enterprise. But one thing sure," continued Wood: "not the slightest knowledge of this business must be known to my family; and as young Trollup has been friendly here during his college days, I am fearful of his company in such hazardous business."

"Is Trollup, as you call him, personally acquainted with your family?" asked Garcia.

"Oh yes; my daughters are fond of him. He is handsome, well-spoken, and you will be surprised at his address when you learn of the surroundings he has had from childhood. I have written him to meet us at the university tomorrow."

"Very well," said Garcia. "We shall see."

"It must be a late hour of the night," said the Professor.

"Let us retire. You must be more than tired to-night,
Garcia, after your long, tedious voyage; but you can imagine how anxious I was to make known to you all the particulars of our business. So now we will retire. I hope you are not too much fatigued to rest well to-night," said the Professor.

"Oh no," answered Garcia. "I shall rest."

So they bade each other good-night and retired. But not to rest. Oh no; there is no rest for a guilty mind. There is no rest for those who seek to strip from virtue the sweet garb of purity and innocence, and leave her chaste and holy form naked to the world.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

BUENA VISTA was the name of a secluded spot near the turnpike road between London and Haithalwaite Lodge, only a short distance from London, but so hidden by surrounding thickets that few of the many passers on this popular drive were cognizant of its existence. Buena Vista (so named because of its location) formed part of a vast estate of woodland formerly owned by Sir Humphrey Hall, who died without heir to his property, and whose only desire on leaving this world was to recompense a tried and faithful servant.

Sir Humphrey had so drawn his last will and testament that a certain reserve of woodland should go to Timothy Trollup, a faithful servant in the Hall family for many years, and that the balance of the property should be distributed, as was the custom in England, to the royal land-survey. At the death of Sir Humphrey, Tim Trollup's support for his wife, two sons, and daughter ceased, and it became necessary that he should locate upon the small reserve, clear the woodland, and by ardent, industrious toil support his family and educate his children.

Winding almost around the reserve came the sparkling little river Oneta, one of the tributaries of the Thames. This stream was well stocked with a variety of pan-fish, and came from the highlands above; it was celebrated for its beautiful mirage-like bottom and bright, sparkling waters, with here and there a lazy eddy of depth sufficient to prevent anything like fording the stream.

Of the varied and promiscuous pastimes of Sir Hum-

phrey, nothing offered him more pleasure than, on a summer evening, to arm himself with fishing-rod and tackle and slowly wend his way down the shada vista to his favorite eddy at the reserve, where some of the underbrush and larger growth had been cut away, and cast his flies on the laughing waters, now and then taking a fish to break the spell, and only stopping, at long intervals, to wipe the perspiration from under his fishing-hat. How little he knew the future of this rustic spot, where for so many years he had spent happy hours in sunshine, casting his dainty flies to kiss the ripples of the crystal stream, and lazily lounging upon some upturned tree to count the "speckled beauties," wet his whistle, and possibly partake of a "chop and tack" in the way of a luncheon, only to resume his casting with renewed vigor until the shades of evening warned him that he should return to the mansion, to keep his engagements and prepare his correspondence for the following day.

Previous to his death, Sir Humphrey had caused to be erected at the "Vista," as he always chose to call it, a shanty of rough, unplaned boards near the eddy or expansion of the stream; and this rustic house, or barn more properly, was so constructed that his equipage could be driven upon the floor without necessitating the separation of vehicle from horses; and it was his custom to make up fishing-parties at the mansion and drive down the turn-pike-road to the "Vista" roadway, where all were delighted to find themselves in the midst of a thicket on the bank of a beautiful stream. This roadway of pebbles and mosses was the favorite drive of Sir Humphrey, and had been carefully laid out under his personal supervision. It

had been so surveyed as to conform to the windings of the river.

The thick foliage on both sides of the driveway arched gracefully overhead, permitting the rays of the sun to steai through the leafy roof and dance on the running water. Altogether the drive was enchanting; yet of that sleepy, dreamy, fairy-like kind of enchantment that carried the mind to a state of oblivious uncertainty as to the real existence of anything. Over mounds, through valleys, winding gracefully around the foot of steep elevations, and on through the woodland; across bridges of rustic design, by sturdy oaks and hemlock swales, until suddenly the eye rests upon the falling water of "Vista Falls," and the broad expansion of the eddy brings to view the little shanty on the water's edge.

Upon the right side of the river was an abrupt elevation of ground extending for some distance backward into the country with an even slope, which was heavily wooded with large towering oaks and massive pines. The river side of the elevation was quite abrupt, and evidences of land-slides were apparent, as in very many places no timber stood, only the smaller growths, together with the wild grape and ivy in profusion. Half-hidden midst the mossy stones and underbrush was a little spring of ice-cold water. And here it was that Sir Humphrey always stopped, drew his flask from his fishing-basket, and, when alone, would drink to the silent toast, "Old spring, we kiss again," or when accompanied by his friends, after pouring a little brandy in one glass and a little water in the other, expressing no partiality for either, but a very warm admiration for both, would drink his friends' health and a hope for a happy day at the eddy.

Nor did Sir Humphrey abandon this practice while vigor lasted. Even after he was too feeble to endure the fatigue of a day's hard fishing, he would drive through the shady road, dismount at the spring, and, drawing the old decanter from the basket as of yore, with trembling hand and tearful eye pour out his rations and drink alone. Often as he stood looking upon the beautiful surface of the spring, it seemed to him that he could see the faces of those who had been many years in their silent graves, and who had stood beside him with brimmers full, and happy hearts, in former years, drinking to toasts for happy lives and happy times together.

Often he had said to himself, as he stood by the spring, looking down on the beautiful scenes below,—the river with its prattling laughter and smiling shores, the little village of Cossington in the distance, with its steeples of gold in the sunlight, and the luxuriant foliage everywhere—"What a beautiful spot for a summer home! perched on the slant of the hill, beside the dear old spring, overlooking the eddy and all." But as years passed by, his ambition for such a home ceased, and he contented himself with an occasional visit to the spring and a few hours' sport at the eddy.

In the will of Sir Humphrey there was provision made for the use of the various implements necessary for the clearing up of woodland,—teams, saws, ploughs, harnesses, wagons, trucks, and the like,—and Tim soon found himself and family comfortably situated at the reserve, busily at work cutting timber and underbrush, building bridges, burning brush-heaps, and other like employment. Tim's two sons, Erold and Sam, were now old enough to give him valuable assistance, and in a short time the reserve about the eddy was cleared up and presented a much different

Trollup, was a boy of more than average intellect—smart, shrewd, quick to perceive anything at all calculated to promote his interests, yet, like most boys of this character, somewhat inclined to be unscrupulous; while Sam was a sleepy, stupid, indifferent lad, caring for but little beyond mere sustenance.

Erold often visited London in company with his father, and in a meagre way knew something of city life.

Sir Humphrey had always entertained a special liking for this young lad, and would often take him to the library and talk hours at a time with him, telling him how essential it was that he should apply himself closely to his books; that he might some day possess a beautiful home and vast estates; that his name should be borne in the history of his country, and that he should court and be courted by the distinguished families of his native land.

Carefully Sir Humphrey would observe the flush in his beautiful black eyes as he poured these words into his ears. Young as he was, his soul was radiant with animation, and within his breast was an ambition to reach a given end; and how successful he was we shall see.

After repeated demands upon the father to send him to a grammar school in London during the winters, he at last succeeded in inducing him to send him alternate years, and finally to allow him to finish an academic course.

During the time Erold was at school, Tim Trollup and the other son worked early and late, winter and summer, clearing the reserve, and drawing wood and logs to the nearest market, sometimes to Cossington and other times to London; and by careful, close manipulations succeeded in accumulating a comfortable property.

Shortly after Erold arrived home he became restless and dissatisfied with the quiet life at the reserve; and feeling that what knowledge he then possessed was but a continual source of annoyance to him, he longed for a more thorough training in the higher arts, and his eyes seemed naturally turned towards mineralogy, specimens of which he was forever bringing to his father's attention, to remain unnoticed, and only extracting words from his father of discouragement towards any further expense of a higher educational training. Still he persistently admonished his father that the life he was leading was irksome indeed, and only tending to destroy his ambition and relax his energies. It was customary at least twice weekly to go to Cossington for the family mail, and on this morning Erold was ready, with hat in hand and great-coat buttoned closely around him, to get the mail and do some other shopping that was necessary for the house. Upon his arrival at Cossington he found a letter addressed to himself from his old friend Prof. Wood, asking could he make it convenient to call at the academy upon his first visit to London, as he had a proposition to make him, and one that he thought would afford ample opportunity for the instruction in mineralogy which he so eagerly sought; stating that an Italian chemist, who had recently come to London, expected to open soon a school of mines for assaying and other purposes, and was anxious to secure the services of an enterprising associate. Erold's heart beat high with hope as he read the letter over and over again to himself on the way home, and planned within his own mind the result of his interview with the Italian professor, whoever he might be. He saw for himself an opportunity to spread out in the world, to let his father and his friends see what really were his mental capabilities.

and it was with much pride he reflected upon the fact that Prof. Wood had selected him of all the members of his class as a fit one to be associated with so learned and distinguished a man.

He could not then see the reason why he of all others of his class had been selected for so responsible a position, but in after-years the reason became more clearly visible. Yet, as it was, he thought he saw the great gates of success thrown open, and with a heart full of hope, and a nature overflowing with ambition, he resolved to go forth into the world, and on the following morning prepared himself for a trip to London.

Upon his arrival in London, he made it his first business to call upon Prof. Wood at the academy, and there find out in detail the nature of the proposition and the character of the duty expected of him. He entered the door of the main corridor below, shook hands with many of his former associates in junior classes, and proceeded to the Professor's department on the second floor, where he nervously knocked at the door, was admitted to the reception-room, and found himself in company with the two Professors. Wood introduced young Trollup as having been a former pupil of his, and one that he felt a strong personal interest in.

As Garcia took the hand of Trollop he looked into his snapping black eyes, and detected the expression of firmness and decision in his face. His lips were closed tightly, covering a set of teeth as white and even as could be wished for, and the degree of firmness with which Trollup seized his hand impressed Garcia with the idea that, no matter what enterprise the young man embarked in, success would surely follow his efforts.

"Well, young man," said Garcia, in broken accents, "I came to this country because I have long thought that along the banks of the river Oneta there would one day be found some quartz of value. Prof. Wood almost ridicules the idea, but I am still of that opinion and understanding that your father's home is situated directly upon this beautiful stream, somewhere in the lowlands, it was our wish to interest you in the enterprise of prospecting; and should we succeed in finding valuable ores, we could then construct a crude shanty in the region of the valuable site and separate (in a small way, to be sure) the precious metal from the quartz. Of course it may all prove a useless, worthless enterprise; but," said Garcia, as he watched closely the expressions of Trollup's eyes, "suppose we do find it, then in two years' time we are wealthy; and don't you see, young man, we could carry on the assaying business in this secluded spot with as much secrecy as we desired, until we were able to purchase all the surrounding territory?"

"What a grand idea!" said young Trollup. "So far as secrecy is concerned, there is no better place in the outskirts than Buena Vista; and," said Erold with animation, "we have a shanty all built that could be used for the purpose with some slight alterations."

"Indeed," said Garcia, as he smiled in satisfaction to Trollup, and at the same time winked at Wood, who stood by his side.

"So then we can begin operations at an early day, can't we?" said Erold, very much pleased with the idea of having a laboratory at Buena Vista.

"All that remains to be done now," said Garcia, "is to secure the consent of your parents as to the use of Buena Vista quarters for the purpose."

- "Oh, you need have no uneasiness regarding that," re-
- "But," said Garcia, "I shall open a day-school in the academy here, and most of our labor will have to be done at night. Do you think you could stand night-work?"
- "Oh yes," answered Erold; "I can do anything there is money in."
- "Very well, young man," said Garcia, briskly. "Prof. Wood informs me you have a knowledge of elementary chemistry too; if so, you will have no difficulty in picking up assaying."
- "Oh no, I think not," returned Erold. "At least, I will apply myself, sir, to any regimen of study you may prescribe."
- "And what salary would you expect, including the use of Buena Vista shanty?" asked Prof. Wood.
- "Will three pounds a week be too uch?" asked Erold, reluctantly.
- "Oh no," answered Garcia, who was anxious to show a pretended interest in the young man's welfare; "we will say five pounds a week, provided the fact of our exploits is kept strictly confidential."
- "I can promise it," said Erold, so anxious to return with the good news to his father that he had arisen from his seat and taken his hat from the table.
  - "When shall we know definitely?" said Garcia.
- "To-morrow," returned Erold, "provided I catch the 3 P.M. train for Cossington."
- "Then we will not detain you," said Prof. Wood, who put out his hands and bade Trollup good-day.
  - "We shall surely see you to-morrow?" said Garcia.
  - "Without fail," returned Erold, as he closed the door of

the reception-room and bounded down the stairway three steps at a jump.

"Well," said Wood, "what do you think of that young man, Garcia?"

"He's a clever boy," returned Garcia, "but the devil is in his eyes; yet it seems that fortune smiles upon our efforts in securing so feasible a location. Say, Wood, before leaving Naples I perfected an admirable process for smelting, and as you wrote that you had arranged for moulds, etc., I only brought along what tools I thought we could not secure in London without arousing suspicion. They are in my box at the house. I intended bringing them down this morning, but you know we left so hurriedly, and, besides, we sat up so late last night that my head has been thick all day."

"It is immaterial," said Wood. "I have all needed tools, plates, and the rest of the plant for making five-pound notes."

"And do you purpose making no bullion?" said Garcia.

"No further than may be necessary to modestly secure the confidence of the Trollup family that we are engaged in a legitimate enterprise. What do you think of breaking the real character of our business to young Trollup now?" asked Wood.

"I should say nothing at present," said Garcia. "Wait, my dear fellow, until we have secured the shanty and have all our tools, etc., at Buena Vista; then should young Trollup refuse to engage in the business, we shall have a means of compelling him to do so. In other words, we will threaten him with exposure unless he joins us."

"You're right," said Wood with an air of satisfaction.

"We have been singularly blessed with good fortune

to-day," said Garcia. "I hope the morrow will not frustrate it all."

"I hope not, truly," said Wood, who had drawn his watch from his pocket and was about to remark the hour, when Rhea's musical voice was heard on the landing. Prof. Garcia opened the door of the reception-room as Rhea came bounding in.

"How do you do? how is everybody?" said Rhea, full of life and animation as she removed her bonnet and tossed it upon the writing-table before her. "So it's a new business you are going to engage in, is it, papa dear? Truly I wish you both every success in your enterprise," said Rhea, happily.

"Rhea Wood, have you been listening to our private conversation in this room?" asked the father in anger.

"It must be so," said Garcia, as he jumped to his feet in a towering rage, and stood staring into her face. "I hate an eavesdropper," said he.

"Why, father," said Rhea, half frightened out of her senses, "what on earth have I said that should cause such an outburst of anger here? I have not heard one word of your conversation in this room, but I must confess there is something strange in all this business."

"Then who was your informant?" asked the father in a husky voice full of suppressed anger.

"Erold Trollup," said Rhea. "He called at the house to-day and said that you were going prospecting down to the reserve. I had no idea, however, there was so much secrecy in it."

"No secrecy at all," answered Garcia, quickly, seeing that things must be righted without delay, otherwise alarming impressions might remain on the girl's mind;

and changing the angry expression of his face to that of a forced smile, said: "Pardon me, Miss Rhea, I was angry for a moment and lost control of my wicked tongue."

"Why should you be angry?" queried Rhea.

- "Through selfishness alone," returned Garcia, always having an answer in readiness. "You see, some years ago your father discovered, in his ramblings, a piece of quartz upon the bank of the little river Oneta, and by careful assaying tests it was found to possess a rare and costly metal; most assiduously has your father kept this secret of his findings, never divulging it to any one but myself. You will excuse me for this explanation," said Garcia, turning a look upon Wood which was not for Rhea to see, but which gave Wood to understand that he considered himself a little the better liar of the two, and then proceeded to explain. "So together we have preserved this secret, in the hope that a time would come when we would be financially able to develop the country and its products.
- "Knowing that we were the sole possessors of this secret for twenty years, you cannot blame us for our expressions of surprise at any intimation of a knowledge of it by others, could you, Miss Rhea?"
- "I suppose not," said Rhea; "but your language was very harsh indeed, and so entirely unprovoked, Professor."
- "I admit it, Miss Rhea; but I trust you will pardon my insulting language."
- "And then to think," said Rhea, as she burst into tears, "of the angry manner in which you addressed me, papa! Surely, had I committed the most grievous error in the world, I could not merit a worse rebuke."
- "Never mind, my darling," said Wood, taking both his daughter's hands, and drawing her up from the chair in

which she was seated. "You cannot imagine how seriously embarrassed your father's business accounts are, and how very necessary it is that he should find a means of obtaining money at once."

"Indeed?" said Rhea. "I was not aware that you were financially embarrassed; only a few days since I heard you say to mamma that your business was never in a more prosperous condition; that your classes in the academy were well filled: and now you say another thing to me."

"Oh, well, my child, your mother needs words of encouragement when she is fatigued with all the cares and annoyances of a household; and besides, Rhea, I never allow my business troubles to reflect upon the happiness of our home: you know that."

"That's true, papa; but mamma intends making Glasis and myself a present of a year's training in music, and I am sure she would not attempt it if she knew the embarrassed state of your bank account," said Rhea.

"Say nothing about my bank account to your mother, my child; everything looks very encouraging now. Seeing that you have only enough knowledge of our business to aggravate you, Rhea, I shall proceed to inform you of what we really intend doing at Buena Vista." Prof. Wood then finished his explanation, which of course embraced the pretended finding of precious metal, etc., and exacted a promise from his daughter that she would not even mention it to any member of the family. All three departed for the Professor's residence, where dinner was served, and the evening given to pleasure. Glasis only remained in the drawing-room long enough to pay her respects to her father's guest, when she excused herself and retired.

The two Professors had withdrawn to the library and

were smoking and chatting, while Mrs. Wood and Rhea were deeply interested in a game of cribbage. Mrs. Wood had been yawning and rubbing her eyes for some little time, when the cathedral bell announced the advanced hour of eleven.

"My daughter," said she, "are you aware that it is past eleven o'clock?"

"No," said Rhea, "it is impossible."

"Oh no, my dear, it is quite possible; so let us step to the library and say good-night to papa and his friend, then we shall retire."

Mrs. Wood walked noiselessly across the drawing-room, followed by her daughter. As she reached the drapery hanging before the door of the library, she could not but remark how completely it obscured all light from there. Pushing aside the drapery, she entered unannounced.

"Good-night, papa," said Rhea, but a pace back of her mother. At the sound of her voice, Prof. Wood quickly closed the drawer that Garcia and himself were gazing into. "Gracious! you startled me, my dears; I supposed you had retired an hour ago."

"Oh no," said Mrs. Wood; "we lost ourselves in a game of cribbage, and were aroused by the cathedral bell announcing the hour of eleven. We thought it only courteous to say good-night before retiring; but it seems we have been rude enough to startle you."

"I did not really mean to say that you startled me, my dear wife; only I was not expecting a call so late as this," said Wood, striving to overcome the awkward position he was placed in.

"You will pardon the intrusion," said Mrs. Wood, who

felt quite injured at the way she was received. "We retire now."

"Good-night, good-night," said Garcia, only too glad to see the ladies depart.

So soon as Rhea and her mother retired that night, Prof. Wood and the Italian looked over various forms of woodcuts, electrotypes, imprints, and other paraphernalia which Wood had secretly obtained and secreted in the drawer of his writing-desk.

Garcia and the Professor wondered if the ladies had any suspicions regarding the stability of the enterprise, and both retired that night with all confidence in the business arrangements for the manufacture of "spurious coin." The following day Erold arrived with the information that Buena Vista was at their disposal, as well as his services, and that a five pounds week was entirely satisfactory to his father and himself.

Consequently, all the instruments, paper, etc., were collected and placed in a large wooden box, securely fastened, and marked "Erold Trollup, via rail to Cossington."

Erold secured the transportation, and on the 15th of October the shanty at the reserve was in readiness for the so-called assaying.

## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

When Rebagliati and his son called upon Madame Garcia on the night of Marie Lavini's departure, she indignantly refused to become a party of the prosecution, remarking that, so far as her faithless husband was concerned, she had no desire to know his whereabouts; saying also that, as Marie Lavini had seen fit to secretly correspond with a married man and receive his attentions and listen to his flattery, she should now be willing to abide by the consequences, and that she did not envy her her position in the least.

Rebagliati, seeing that all further efforts were futile indeed, expressed his sympathy for the poor girl, whose life was blasted and in the hands of a wretch. Watching the effect these words had upon the face of Madame Garcia, and feeling satisfied that an impression had been made, which in time would soften her heart and bring about sufficient sympathy to arouse that spirit of her noble nature necessary to the end of seeking her husband's whereabouts and thus rescue Marie from her terrible fate, he left the house partially satisfied with the interview.

Young Rebagliati joined his father at the doorway of the reception-room, and soon both were seated in the patrol-wagon en route for the General's mansion.

As the wagon turned into Cypress Avenue, the magistrate's attention was drawn to the coming of a galloping horse down the via at break-neck pace. Stopping the

wagon to know whether the party was in search of himself he soon recognized the figure of Lieutenant Pachi.

The rays of the morning sun were softly stealing over the horizon, and the windows of the old stone church looked like sheets of molten gold. The air was calm ands till as death; the day itself seemed wrapped in silence, as if in mourning for the dead. The birds had finished their morning songs, and no sound was audible save the clatter of the hoofs of the approaching steed. Up the via came the galloping steed, with Lieutenant Pachi mounted upon it.

"Good-morning-Rebagliati," said the lieutenant. "I have just passed through the most distressing experience of all my life. You will be shocked when I tell you that Madame Lavini lies dead at the castle, and all through the stupidity of a man-servant, Phil Aggi, who became frightened at the indisposition of Signor Lavini, his master, and thought he was doing his mistress a great kindness by informing her of the death of her husband."

"The confounded ape!" shouted the magistrate, "he should be severely punished for his presumptuousness. What do you say his name is—Phil Aggi? I wonder if he can be the son of old Palippi Aggi, the door-keeper at the cathedral for so many years. But now I believe the old man is living with a family on the coast somewhere across the narrows. Poor old Palippi Aggi! he was a kind old man, and for many years a servant in the Lavini family, but afterward a keeper of the outside gates of the cathedral. It seems like yesterday I was married, and well I remember the old man's standing beside the huge iron posts, bowing and scraping as we entered the cathedral. He reared a large family here, I believe. Only a few years ago I heard of

the death of his wife and the subsequent removal of the old man from the cathedral. But tell me, Lieutenant Pachi, what arrangements have you made for the care of the remains of Madame Lavini, and how in Heaven's name can you find courage to break the sad news to your poor old father, to say nothing of Signor Lavini, should he recover from the terrible shock?"

"I am at a loss to know myself," answered the lieutenant.

"But something must be done at once."

"Yes," answered the magistrate, "there is no use mincing matters. I can see but one course to pursue, and that is to proceed at once to your father's home and make known the worst. I have been for many years the police magistrate of this city, and thought I had witnessed most every form of distress and suffering, but never before have I witnessed such as this."

Just as the clock in the lodge sounded the hour of nine in the morning, the police patrol-wagon stood at the lodge-keeper's door, and Lieutenant Pachi, who had dismounted a moment before, pulled the great iron lever and loosened the gates. Magistrate Rebagliati drove through the gates, and turning the horses towards the shrubbery, that they might be hidden from idle inspection of the many passers-by at this advanced hour of the morning,—being specially careful that his presence should not excite the curiosity of any one,—he placed the reins in the hands of his son, and requested that any and all curious inquiries should receive evasive and negative answers. Alighting from the patrol-wagon, he joined the lieutenant, and both gentlemen walked towards the lodge-keeper's gate, ascended the low stone stairway, and entered the lodge.

As the lodge-keeper turned about in his chair, the inner

door opened and Police Magistrate Rebagliati stood in the doorway.

"Good gracious! you startled me," said the lodge-keeper.

"You should not be startled at seeing me at most any time," answered Rebagliati.

"I suppose not," said the gateman; "but you see, sir, it is such an early hour, and, to be truthful, I am just half asleep as yet. Master Pachi has always told me that there was no great hurry about my coming around in the morning, and you see, sir, I'm an old man now. I've been twenty years in the service of the General, sir, and must yet hear the first cross word."

At this moment the gate-bell rang, and Lieutenant Pachi, stepping through the lodge, opened the door and took the morning paper from the hands of the postman. As his eyes rested upon the great black head lines—"An elopement in high life. Mademoiselle Marie Lavini, the rich and accomplished heiress of Lavini Castle, leaves home and friends forever, and unites her destinies with a handsome professor of the university, Meonta Garcia, who also abandons a wife and child. Signor Lavini lies in the city at the home of General Pachi in a dying condition. No clue to the whereabouts of the absconding couple"-Lieutenant Pachi stood dumb with amazement. Not until this moment had the awful truth of the departure of his heart's idol, Marie, dawned fully upon him, nor did the character of the offense she had committed seem before so grievous. The thrilling incidents of the night had seemingly benumbed his sensibilities, and now the awful realization of the truth crushed out his hopes, and dropping to his knees, with hands uplifted to Heaven, he prayed that God would right it all, that the horrid predictions

might prove false, and that Marie Lavini should be spared so cruel a fate.

No sooner had these words crossed the pale lips of the lieutenant, than something took possession of his nature; new hopes dawned thick and fast; doubts as to the fact of Marie's going with the Professor arose at once in his mind, and although everything seemed to point to the guiltiness of her actions, there was an inward consciousness upon the part of Lieutenant Pachi that Marie's good name was being wantonly assailed, and that her pure, bright, innocent character would shine out in all its radiant splendor.

Rebagliati, who had listened to the lodge-keeper's story, had wound up the conversation by asking the latter if he had heard the news of Signor Lavini's sudden illness, and if he was aware that Signor Lavini now lay dangerously ill at the General's home. But before old Cato, the lodge-keeper, could answer the question, Lieutenant Pachi burst open the door and in a wild, excited manner exclaimed:

"Rebagliati, the morning papers feast upon our misfortunes. O God, that I could only read the death of the lovely girl, in place of—in place of this!" pointing his finger to the double-leaded head-lines at the top of the column.

"Yes," answered the magistrate, "far preferable that she were dead than consigned to a life of depravity and shame."

"Oh, don't speak that way, I pray you, Rebagliati," answered the lieutenant, in emotion. "Though her condition may be desperate, shame could never rest upon that fair brow. I say, Rebagliati, has it occurred to you that possibly this beautiful girl is the unfortunate subject of a wretched and foul conspiracy upon the part of that Italian, and that she has been abducted from home and friends

and secreted for the purpose of extorting money from her wealthy parents?"

"No, lieutenant, such ideas are frivolous indeed. How in the name of all possessed could any man effectually carry out so dastardly an enterprise without first of all gaining the confidence of his victim?"

"I do not know," answered the lieutenant, hesitatingly; "but I swear, Rebagliati, since a few moments ago a strange impression lurks in my mind, and I cannot brush it away. Do you know, sir, that the very moment my eyes rested upon those tell-tale head-lines, something whispered to my soul that they were false; that this poor, unprotected girl has been snatched from our midst by the base and evil designs of that cowardly rascal, Meonta Garcia; and, Rebagliati, as I stand before you, and raise my hands to Him who knows the truth of all, to Him who guides our wandering, weary feet through thorny paths to rosy fields, remember, I say these words: Marie Lavini has been abducted from Naples, and to-day is as innocent and guiltless of the terrible consequences that have arisen since her departure as I am."

"How very positive you are!" answered the magistrate.

"Yes, Rebagliati, I am so positive that this young girl has been wrongly dealt with, that I shall continue so to think until I have some definite knowledge to the contrary."

"If this be true," said the magistrate, "I wonder at your composure. Gossip has it that you are more than casually interested in the welfare of Marie."

"Composure? And do you think I am composed, after such awful experiences? I thought myself the most distracted man in Italy. But enough of this," answered the

lieutenant with a sigh; "we must carry the news of the death of Madame Lavini, and procrastination does not help the matter at all. Yet I am frank to confess it a duty almost too severe for me to-day; my heart aches and my brain reels, as I think of all I have lost in the past six hours. But I will go."

As Lieutenant Pachi spoke, he opened the door to the terrace walk, and hastily passed along beside the conservatory to the mansion, leaving the magistrate and his son engaged in conversation within the lodge. Stepping to the door of the library and placing his hand upon the latch, his courage seemed almost to have forsaken him. Casting his eyes askant, he noticed the form of his father through the window of the library.

General Pachi, who had rested some during the night, had arisen early, and placed his services at the disposal of Signor Lavini, who had regained consciousness, and at whose request he had retired to the library to pen a few lines to Madame Lavini "that her husband was out of danger, and would soon be comfortably within the walls of Lavini Castle."

Lieutenant Pachi looked twice to be sure that he could not be mistaken in his father's form, and then summoned courage enough to push open the door, believing that he had arrived at an opportune moment and found his father alone. As he stepped through the hallway and opened the door of the library, General Pachi arose and hastily folded a note he had written and placed it in the hands of his son, requesting him to deliver it as speedily as possible, in person, to Madame Lavini at Lavini Castle.

As Lieutenant Pachi took the note, his trembling hand and pallid face betrayed him. He stood with eyes cast down

upon the rug beneath his feet. The duty that he must now perform overwhelmed him.

"And why do you hesitate, my son?" asked the General, in wonderment.

- "Why do I hesitate? Madame Lavini lies dead at Lavini Castle."
- "Dead!" gasped the General. "Oh, what a hideous series of nightmares am I passing through! William, are you sure Madame Lavini is dead?"
  - "Yes, father; Madame Lavini is no more."
- "Then," said the General, "that stupid Italian shall die for his pains. Speak low, William, and tell me the particulars of Madame Lavini's death. Did that rascal Aggi notify her of all this business?"
- "No," answered the lieutenant, not intentionally.

  "The poor devil upon his arrival at the mansion hastened to the sleeping-apartment of Annine, the old nurse, and during a conversation with her became excited and spoke loudly. His conversation aroused Madame Lavini, who listened at the door of the corridor; and when Phil Aggi expressed the condition of his master, Madame Lavini fell to the floor, and died almost instantly after."
- "Oh, William! shall we ever recover from the doings of this fearful night? But not one word of this must enter the ear of Signor Lavini, said the General. All newspaper reports must be carefully suppressed, and the nurses must be cautiously instructed that no suspicious whisperings or expressions of surprise may be indulged in by them while in attendance. And now, William, my son, you need rest and must have it. I shall perform the painful duty of notifying your mother of the death of one of her dearest friends; but shall first insist that you breakfast and retire

for at least a few hours, that you may join me later in making arrangements for the funeral of Madame Lavini. I have slept nearly five hours, and feel quite refreshed this morning. Besides, the restoration of Signor Lavini to consciousness has given me great reason to be thankful."

As Lieutenant Pachi arose to leave the room he notified his father of the presence of the magistrate and his son at the lodge, and suggested that all preliminaries might be arranged by them at once for the care of the remains.

General Pachi acted promptly upon the suggestion, and went at once to the lodge; while William took breakfast and retired to his chamber to rest. Thowing himself upon the bed, completely exhausted, he fell asleep.

The General notified Madame Pachi of the death of Signor Lavini's wife, after having despatched the magistrate and his son to have all needed preparations for the care of the remains of Madame Lavini made.

The death of Madame Lavini, though shocking indeed, was a thing that had been almost hourly expected; and a feeling of relief, mingled with that of intense sorrow, generally prevailed.

General and Madame Pachi consulted the various friends of the Lavinis, and all decided that on account of the many sad circumstances attending the death of Madame Lavini the funeral obsequies should be quietly carried out and that none but the intimate friends and relations of the family should participate in the same.

It was also thought best to hasten the interment as much as decency would permit, on account of the critical condition of Signor Lavini. Consequently the following Wednesday the funeral was held at the castle, and the remains deposited in the family vault at Oak Leaf Terrace, adjoining the estate.

Lavini Castle was closed and all the servants dismissed save Annine, who was engaged by General Pachi as a waitress in the mansion, and who after a short time was detailed to care for Signor Lavini during his convalescence. Poor Phil Aggi was turned out of the house, and was a wanderer in the world, friendless and penniless.

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

GENERAL PACHI and his son had been arranging, since the funeral of Madame Lavini and the closure of Lavini Castle, to organize an intelligent movement to search the city for the recovery of Marie Lavini dead or alive.

The first question Signor Lavini asked in the morning, and the last at night, was, "What has been heard of the whereabouts of my blessed child?"

The entire detective force was on the alert. Special orders had been issued to the patrolmen in their districts, and a reward of ten thousand dollars offered for the recovery of the body of Marie Lavini dead or alive, as well as five thousand dollars reward for the recovery of Meonta Garcia. This reward was proffered by Signor Lavini himself, and cabled to all foreign countries. He reasoned that it would be joy to know that, if dead, his daughter's sufferings were over; and if alive, due steps would be taken to bring her safely to him.

The newspapers were constantly full of rumors regarding Marie's whereabouts, and not a day passed but that some one had some startling news to impart, and yet nothing of importance was developed.

Week followed week, and month followed month; still no tidings of the departed. Signor Lavini had entirely recovered, and had purchased a home in Naples, where he and Annine were quietly living. Most every day he drove to the castle, and would seat himself under the trees down by the riverside, and bury his face in his hands and weep like a child.

General Pachi did not allow Signor Lavini to spend many lonely hours; in fact he made it his business to accompany him in most all his pleasures. Quite frequently they would drive together to the castle, and return in the moonlight. General Pachi's son William had passed through a serious illness of nervous prostration, and was only convalescent when ordered to report for duty in Florence at the headquarters of the gulf. General Pachi was delighted at the order, knowing what a very desirable location the quarters were in; yet of course he deplored the separation that must of necessity take place. The quarters at Florence were situated in the midst of a dense fig-orchard upon the banks of the river Arno, a navigable stream from the city of Florence to the Gulf of Genoa. There were cruising vessels owned by the government at the disposal of the officers, as well as transportation boats belonging to the Commissary Department, constantly in motion between Florence and the gulf. At the mouth of the river perched the little city of Pisa, famous as a pleasure-resort for the wealthy silk merchants of northern Italy.

Lieutenant Pachi would not find society wanting in his new location, as plenty of social advantages were held out to the officers of the post. All of these pleasant facts had been made known to young Pachi by his father, yet the lieutenant expressed but little willingness to comply with the order. Lieutenant Pachi had suffered the loss of his heart's idol, and bitterly did he regret that he had not more aggressively pressed his cause when in the presence of Marie. He had reasons for believing that Marie regard-

ed him in the light of a very dear friend, and possibly something a little nearer.

Upon several occasions she had addressed him in terms expressing a warm admiration of his character and kind-heartedness, yet nothing had passed between them that gave Lieutenant Pachi a right to believe that Marie actually loved him.

At the time of their meeting upon the river Tibez, it required no scrutiny to detect the mutual admiration existing between them; and had it not been for the handsome face of Prof. Garcia on the night of the party at the castle, doubtless an uninterrupted courtship would have ensued.

Night and day the picture foremost in the mind of Lieutenant Pachi was the calm, sweet face and figure of Marie Lavini. The thought that she had been carried away by a designing scoundrel seemed too much for him to bear. He would wake out of a sound sleep with a groan of agony, and great, cold drops of perspiration standing out upon his body. No sooner would he fall asleep again, than hideous dreams anew disturbed him. Once he dreamt he saw Marie upon the very edge of a steep precipice, clinging to a rotten crag, and praying for succor; yet he could not give her assistance. Finally his mental and physical forces gave way under the terrific pressure.

The physician who had so successfully brought Signor Lavini through his terrible crisis was in attendance upon Lieutenant Pachi, and pronounced his disease that of nervous prostration. Though young Pachi had been discharged by his physician, his sufferings had not ceased by any means; still he had more control over his prostrated nerves.

When the order came, it seemed to him that all hope of

ever again seeing or renewing his friendship with Marie was over. He had hoped to be personally able to canvass all the facts pertaining to the whereabouts of the poor girl; but now his services must be given to his country.

Lieutenant Pachi had not informed his father of the serious loss he had sustained in the departure of Marie; nor did young Pachi have the remotest idea that in the same departure his father's final chance of making good the funds he had confiscated from the government had disappeared.

Lieutenant Pachi had decided to go to Signor Lavini, before his departure for Florence, and thoroughly and completely make known the affection he entertained for his daughter, the loss he had sustained, and the reason of his illness; not believing that a knowledge upon the part of Signor Lavini of the true facts in the case would in any way change his prospects of recovering his terrible loss, but simply to gratify the yearnings of a disappointed nature. Consequently he availed himself of the first opportunity, and told Signor Lavini the whole truth.

It was with great interest and pride Signor Lavini listened to his confessions of love and devotion to his departed daughter. He pitied young Pachi; when he heard from his lips the sufferings he had endured, he looked upon him with no little degree of interest and pride. Oh, how he longed to see his blessed child, to fondle her silken tresses and kiss her sweet, smiling lips again as of yore! How dark the world seemed to him as he sat listening to the heart-broken words of the young lieutenant before him! "So I am not alone in mysufferings," said Signor Lavini, as he put forth his hand to take that of Lieutenant Pachi, which he clasped tightly in his own; great tears rolled down his cheeks as he

tremblingly held the hand of his young friend. "Yes," said he, "we will suffer our loss patiently. You must go to perform the duty your country bids you do. This will be a grateful distraction to your mind, while I shall live in suffering unmolested. Yet shall I bravely hope on, till God calls me to my final rest."

Both gentlemen had arisen from the large rustic bench upon which they were seated, and walked down the steps leading from the veranda of Signor Lavini's new home to the street.

"One thing, my young friend, rest assured," said Signor Lavini: "if my darling child is in the land of the living, she shall be found if it costs every penny of the Lavini estate. We must wait patiently and hopefully. And though months and years may elapse, I shall ever trust in the goodness of God to restore my darling child to me in safety, and now," he concluded, "if you have any suggestions to make as to how to facilitate the search that is now being made, I shall gratefully accept the same."

"Yes, Signor," answered the lieutenant. "I have been thinking of late that Madame Garcia must have some knowledge as to her husband's whereabouts. Perhaps after his departure she may have found some correspondence, or something that would lead to his discovery. At any rate, Signor Lavini, I should certainly call upon Madame Garcia, and, if possible, establish a friendship with her. She is a delightful lady, and has suffered the humiliation and embarrassment of her husband's departure bravely. In fact, I should make it my first duty," said the lieutenant, "to know Madame Garcia."

"The idea is a capital one," answered Signor Lavini,

"and possibly may prove of the utmost benefit in discovering the whereabouts of my beloved child."

Signor Lavini once more wished his young friend the best of success in his new quarters, and said that he should remember him, not as a friend, but as his son; that he should ever entertain a fatherly interest in his welfare, and should always stand ready to befriend him.

Young Pachi was too full of emotion to say a word, but shook the hand of Signor Lavini and was gone.

Signor Lavini returned to the veranda, and sat pondering upon the suggestion of his young friend, while Lieutenant Pachi returned to the house of his father a much happier man. He was satisfied that he had made a favorable impression upon the father of Marie, and that in the event of Marie's return his suit would meet no opposition from this quarter.

Not for one moment had Lieutenant Pachi allowed himself to believe but that Marie Lavini would one day return to Naples as pure and undefiled as the day upon which she left. His theory that she had been abducted from home by that rascal Garcia met the views of her father entirely, and Signor Lavini had every reason to believe that his daughter would be a troublesome prisoner.

What he feared most was the announcement of her death; and though he shrank from the idea that she had voluntarily become a partner of Prof. Garcia, he was willing indeed to forgive any error the poor girl had made, no matter how grievous. All he asked was the face and form of his beloved child, and most thoroughly and earnestly had he decided to obtain the same, even though it should require the work of the balance of his unhappy life.

Signor Lavini, wrapped in deep thought for a long time,

was still sitting upon the veranda. The sun had long gone to rest, and the pale, silver moon was slowly ascending the heavens and casting its light upon the world below; yet the change was unobserved by Signor Lavini. His mind had penetrated too deeply into the arrangements that must ensue to secure his child, and not until the "man in the moon" looked him square in the face did he appreciate the length of time he had spent in reverie.

Jumping to his feet with an air of satisfaction at his plans, he was astonished to know that the supper-hour had passed and that the evening was somewhat advanced.

Annine had not been alarmed that Signor Lavini was absent at the supper-hour, on account of his having frequently remained at the house of General Pachi until quite late in the evening; but had she known that her master was all this time seated upon the side veranda, doubtless his reverie would have been sadly interrupted.

One of the old nurse's greatest afflictions was the absence of Signor Lavini from his accustomed seat at the table during meal-time, not alone because she was anxious that he should be regularly served for health's sake, but chiefly because it was at this hour Signor Lavini talked freely and sadly of his deplorable loss.

Never since the day of Madame Lavini's death and the simultaneous loss of his angel child had he failed to petition his Maker to give peaceful rest to the soul of his departed wife, and to restore to his bosom his beloved daughter. He had required of Annine that she should never fail to arrange the sittings at the table exactly as they were in former times, when in the midst of uninterrupted happiness and joy.

In fact, Signor Lavini had always taken great pride in serving family dinners. Though the most indulgent of

fathers at all other times, he was decidedly annoyed if guests were tardy or children noisy at the table.

He seemed to look upon the dinner-table as a grand daily reunion for the entire family; this being the case, one can readily understand his sufferings from day to day, month to month, and year to year. It was indeed a pitiful sight to see the dear, sad face of Signor Lavini as he entered the dining-room. Poor, heart-broken, wretched man! cruel fate had snatched his family from him.

His beloved wife had always greeted him with a happy smile and pleasant word, and his daughter's shower of kisses and caresses had never been wanting.

There he would sit alone, and, through the tears that streamed down his wrinkled face, try to eat the meal so carefully and daintily prepared for him. Often he would close his tearful eyes in prayerful petition that when he opened them he might be encircled once more by his beloved family. "Oh, what have I done that I should be thus deprived of all that was dear to me, of all that was pure and bright in my life, and left like a stranded ship upon a desolate shore?" he would murmur to himself again and again.

Often the burden of his sorrows seemed greater than he could bear, and he would break down and weep like a little child.

Again, Annine would answer the tappings of his bell, only to find him in a mood of talking over the things of the past. He would take the hand of the dear old nurse, and squeeze it tightly in his own, as if he feared that she, too, would be taken from him. So it was that season after season came and found him still alone.

Annine had more than once suggested the idea of his

marrying again, fearing that his mind would break down under its overwhelming burden.

Madame Lavini had often said to him that in case of her death she should much prefer that he should marry again, rather than drag out a lonely, rusty existence. She had also repeatedly told him that he could not reasonably hope to retain his daughter's presence through life. But, O God! how little had she thought their blessed child would one day be an outcast in the world! and from the bottom of his heart he thanked his Maker that she had died too soon to know the awful fact.

Signor Lavini had reflected seriously upon the suggestions of the young officer before retiring that night, and had decided to address a note to Madame Garcia asking that he might be permitted to call and converse with her upon a subject of vital importance to him and possibly none the less so to her. Consequently on the following day he addressed the following note to Madame Garcia:

"101 Cypress Avenue, Naples City, Nov. 7, 18—.
"Madame Meonta Garcia.

"MY DEAR MADAME: Forgive the liberty I take in addressing you, and still further forgive me for alluding to a subject so painful in all its details, but kindly listen to the petition of a father in search of his only child; and when I have finished this epistle, if it should have caused you pain, I beseech you to bear it for the sake of the writer, who is also a most wretched sufferer. You have your little son to comfort and console you, while I am left alone.

"You are aware that circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Meonta Garcia and my daughter give color to the rumor that they have left Italy together; therefore, as we are common sufferers, I write to ask that I may be permitted to call upon you at your home in the near future, and that you will kindly grant me an audience of an hour's duration.

"I have delayed writing you these many months because I heard from the lips of Police Magistrate Rebagliati that you were incensed at my daughter. I do therefore, my good lady, beg that you will reconsider your former decision and grant this request.

'Sincerely and respectfully yours,
"AGRO LAVINI."

This letter was despatched by special messenger as early the following morning as decency would permit; and, much to the surprise and satisfaction of the writer, the messenger returned with an open letter upon which was written the following:

"Signor Lavini.

"RESPECTED SIR: I shall be delighted to receive you at any time it may seem your pleasure to honor me with your presence. Faithfully yours, AGNES GARCIA."

That night, at supper, Annine noticed for the first time since the death of his wife and loss of his daughter Signor Lavini's disposition to be happy. It seemed to her that the awful cloud of darkness that had so long hung over him was soon to display its silver lining.

Signor Lavini had a faint impression that his call on Madame Garcia was to be attended with some good news, and it was with suppressed anxiety that he waited over the next day, it being Sunday, before calling on Madame Garcia. On Monday evening, however, Signor Lavini, for the first time since the death of his wife, donned a dress coat, and, attired in full dress, drove to the house of Madame Garcia. Alighting, he ascended the steps and pulled the bell. Soon a low, squatty-looking figure presented itself before him.

"Good-evening, sir," said Matilda, the maid. "Will you be seated in the reception-room, and what name shall I present?"

Before Matilda had finished speaking, Signor Lavini had drawn a card from his pocket which he placed in the hand of Matilda. Soon Signor Lavini heard footsteps in the corridor, and assuming that they were those of Madame Garcia, had quickly arisen, and, standing before a large mirror resting upon the mantel, he gave the ends of his iron-gray mustache a sudden twist, brushed a few gray rairs from his forehead, and arranged the flowers in the lapel of his coat, and was about to seat himself again as Madame Garcia entered the door of the reception-room.

"Ah, Madame Garcia," said Lavini, as he put forth his hand, "I assure you I appreciate the sacrifice you make for my sake."

"It is no sacrifice, Signor Lavini. I feel greatly honored at your presence," said Madame Garcia, giving the hand of Signor Lavini a warm and cordial shaking. "And as for any reference to the subject of Meonta Garcia, I am now entirely passive to that. At first I felt deeply embarrassed and humiliated, but time has taught me that in his departure I was singularly blessed. Will you kindly step upstairs to the library?" continued Madame Garcia. "We shall there be quite free from all interruptions."

"Certainly," answered Signor Lavini, who presented his arm to Madame Garcia, and both ascended the broad walnut stairway to the hall above.

No sooner were they seated in the drawing-room, than Signor Lavini broached the subject of his great loss in the departure of his daughter and the death of Madame Lavini, and touchingly he narrated all the features of his sufferings from month to month since the so fateful occurrence.

Madame Garcia sat with eyes cast down, and great tears hung loosely between her long, black eyelashes; and as the words of sorrow and desolation rolled from the lips of Signor Lavini, each word seemed more deeply to impress her with profound pity and sympathy for him, and most truly did she recognize the fearful blow he had sustained. Never before had she appreciated that any one's sufferings and misfortunes could equal her own. As Signor Lavini spoke of his darling child he burst into tears and implored Madame Garcia to harbor no ill-will against her; that he knew her motives were pure and innocent, and, though she had been unwise beyond measure, he still believed her true position was not a deceitful one, and that some day it would be found that she had been victimized and harshly misjudged.

"Oh, Madame Garcia," said Signor Lavini, "will she not be severely chastised, whether innocent or not, for the terrible calamity that has befallen us? Oh, let the world misjudge; but, my dear Madame," cried Signor Lavini, "I beseech you to give my poor wandering, homeless child the benefit of the doubt. If you have any positive knowledge of her guilt, I will not ask it; but if you have only evidence that is circumstantial, which in a biassed mind would serve to prejudice you, I beseech you to reserve your opinion. Oh, Madame Garcia, can you not, upon reflecting the server of the server opinion. Oh, Madame Garcia, can you not, upon reflecting the server opinion.

tion, find in your own past life little flaws and defects that you would not care to have paraded before the public eye and magnified by public criticism? Imagine, if you can, the feelings of a man whose summer of life has nearly passed; and as the frowning skies of autumn shut out the sunshines of the past, he must go wandering forth alone, bereft of wife, of home, of child, with no protection from the surly blasts of life's cold winter save the dim remembrances of the past. Such a man am I."

As Signor Lavini finished speaking he buried his face in

his hands and sobbed bitterly.

Madame Garcia had suffered as he spoke these words, and pitied Signor Lavini beyond description. She arose as if impelled by a force supernatural, crossed the room, and kneeling beside the dear old man, took his hand from his face and held it firmly in her own.

"I pity you, Signor Lavini. God knows I would not add one drop of bitterness to your now overflowing cup of sorrow," said Madame Garcia. "I entertain nothing but the kindest feelings towards Marie now; but in the past I am frank to say that I most cordially despised her—not that I had ever wished for the return of my faithless, worthless husband, but because I had contributory evidence that she had plotted the destruction of my family. Yet, Signor Lavini, as I reflect upon the things of the past, I can more clearly see how, by artful practices and deceitful misrepresentations, Marie could have been entangled in the meshes of Garcia's artful designs; and besides all this, I can never again believe the child of such a parent capable of such infamous conduct."

"Madame Garcia," said Signor Lavini, "your words come into my life as a sweet message of love and consolation,

Again and again I thank you for this kindly assurance; and oh, if it should yet be found that my poor child was spotless and innocent, will it not more than compensate us for the faith we have in her?"

"Yes, Signor Lavini," answered Madame Garcia. "And now let us brush away all doubts, and I shall produce all the information I have upon the subject of my husband's departure; possibly by a union of all the circumstances some definite conclusion may be arrived at. At any rate, there are many papers in my husband's secretary that I never examined; and whatever knowledge I have has come to my notice accidentally. It was enough for me to know that my husband had abandoned me and my darling little child; and as to the course he had taken, I felt totally dis-Therefore, Signor," said Madame Garcia, interested. "many things may come to light that will bear upon the whereabouts of your departed daughter; at least I shall place all papers at your disposal and subject to your inspection; and may God direct you to a knowledge of the whereabouts of your darling child."

"Oh, Madame Garcia, I do most thoroughly appreciate this special act of kindness to me," returned Signor Lavini. "If in any manner I can repay you for all your goodness, I shall remain always at your service. I shall avail myself of the first opportunity of inspecting the papers of Meonta Garcia; and let us hope that we may find something that will lead to the discovery of my poor homeless child."

Signor Lavini had started down the stairway followed by Madame Garcia; and as he took his hat, about to leave, Madame Garcia put out her hand and said, "Signor Lavini, will you please call again to-morrow evening? I shall then

have some of the papers in readiness, and we will begin the search together."

"With your permission I shall surely call," said Signor Lavini; and pressing Madame Garcia's hand to his lips, he bade her good-night and departed.

## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

MARIE LAVINI and her aged companion left the ticket office on the dock that day together.

Paleppi had finally succeeded in obtaining the consent of Marie to accompany him to the palace of the Retinellis, in whose service he was employed as a gardener. Yet before she had given her consent she had once more exacted a promise from him that under no circumstances should he ever divulge her name or station in life; a promise the poor old man faithfully kept to the hour of his death.

The palace of the Retinellis was located in Malaga, a small Spanish town, and was justly celebrated for its costliness and grandeur. The family name was well known to all the better classes on the northern coast of the Mediterranean, as well as in Naples, where the oldest of the Retinellis at one time figured conspicuously in public affairs.

Upon almost every bottle of Malaga wine, at this time, could be found the imprint of the Retinellis, either of father or son. Marie Lavini had no sooner heard the name of Retinelli than she knew the humiliation she should be subjected to, as a servant in their midst. She shuddered as the thought passed through her mind of the artificial life she now must lead. Often had she heard of the desperate character of the Retinelli family, and oh, how she dreaded going with her poor old faithful comrade! Yet she had promised to go, and feeling ready to welcome the hour of her death if necessary, she decided that possibly the humiliations and embarrassments she should endure

might hasten the end of her shattered life; therefore she consented to go.

It was on a rainy, cheerless evening she passed through the high stone gateway leading to the palace of the Retinellis. Beside her trudged the old faithful servant of her father, hardly able to stand the fatigues of the day's long, tiresome journey. Soon the doorway of the sub-basement was reached, and Paleppi Aggi pushed open the door. "Right this way, Marie," said the old man, as he took the hand of the poor girl, and they passed through the long, dark alley-way that led to the laundry-room. The old man rapped upon the door, and soon a woman of immense proportions and ugly face opened the door.

"Hello! old Aggi," said she, "I heard the master grum-

bling about your absence to-day."

"I was necessarily detained," said the old man, trem-

blingly.

"Explain that to your master," said the gruff, disagreeable woman, who had just spied the person of Marie beside him. "What ragamuffin is this you're bringing to our door to-night?" said the masculine voice.

"It is a poor, homeless girl," said the old man, who stood squeezing the hand of Marie, trying to impart some

little consolation in this severe trial.

"This is not a home for beggars, old man; and I wonder at your impudence in bringing such a person here for shelter to-night, without permission from your master."

"Is Signor Retinelli at home?" asked the old man.

"No, he is not here. His son is here, and I shall call him to know if this must be the refuge for all the outcasts of the coast."

Every muscle of Marie Lavini's body quivered with

wrathful indignation, as she listened to the cold, heartless wretch beside her.

"Be calm, dear girl," said the old man.

"Never mind me," said Marie, "I am quite equal to the task. Sufferings are blessings to me now; and it is right that I should suffer too, after all the disasters my actions have produced."

The laundress had gone to the stairway and summoned young Retinelli, a tall, handsome fellow, to accompany her; and both were approaching the place where the old man and Marie were standing. Marie had turned her face towards the door; and the old man rushed forward, and falling to his knees before his youthful master, pleaded for shelter for the beautiful girl beside him.

"So this is the way you return after two days' absence without leave, is it, Aggi? The beggar you have here must have detained you. Let me tell you once for all, old man, this is not a rendezvous for itinerate paupers," snarled the young Retinelli, as he puffed the smoke from his cheroot. "So now you may take your beggarly companion from under this roof at once."

"Oh, not in the storm and darkness, I implore you!" said the old man. "Oh, Signor, Signor! I beg you to let this poor, homeless girl remain here till the morning light at least!"

"No," growled the Retinelli. "How dare you ask for such a thing!"

Marie could stand no longer the burning insults that were being heaped upon her. "Itinerate pauper!" She had muttered these words between her lips, and prayed God to give her strength to conquer the whirlwind of passion that was traversing her veins, yet she could stand it

no longer; and throwing the old greasy cape from her head and shoulders, she rushed like a maniac to the side of her feeble companion. Her face was white as death, and her frame quivered with anger and indignation. "Arise, Paleppi Aggi," said Marie. "Kneel to your superiors, and not to wine-sellers and gamblers who have sent desolation into thousands of homes upon this coast, in order that they might build the palace of the Retinellis. I am not the 'itinerate pauper' you thought I was. I am a lady, sir; and could as speedily place my hand upon a fortune to-night as yourself. Circumstances over which I have no control place me to-night beside this poor and helpless man. It is needless to say, sir, we appreciate beyond comparison the hospitalities of the Retinellis. So, sir, this old man and his beggarly companion, as you say, shall leave the palace of the Retinellis together."

"Stop!" cried the Retinelli.

"No," came the defiant answer of Marie Lavini, as the door closed and they were gone. Young Retinelli stood dumb with amazement. The lovely face and figure of Marie Lavini had dazed him. As soon as he recovered himself he dashed up the stairway, and seizing his coat and hat from the rack, rushed eagerly out into the night. "I shall stop them," he said to himself. "I must look again upon that bewitching creature and know her name."

Marie Lavini and the old man had anticipated his coming, and secreted themselves beside the great stone pillars of the gateway. Just as Retinelli passed through the gateway, he called out in a deep and angry voice, "Paleppi Aggi, I demand that you shall surrender yourself." Then he listened, only to hear his own voice die out upon

the wind. Paleppi Aggi and Marie Lavini were close enough to him to have touched his garments.

Once more he cried out, and coupled a curse with his angry words. Marie and the old man clung closely together. There stood young Retinelli, muttering to himself that he should wait till daylight and then search for the beautiful woman that had flashed upon his life and in another instant was gone from his view.

All that dreary, rainy night Marie Lavini and the dear old man trudged along together, till the rays of morning light broke through the eastern sky and lighted up the dreary world.

They came at last to an old shanty upon the coast, at the mouth of a small river.

Marie stepped to the door and rapped. Soon a tall, burly-looking, man stood in the door of the shanty; in his hand he held a number of playing-cards, and around his waist was a russet-colored belt supporting a revolver on either side. "Good-morning, Miss," said the Spaniard. "Is there su'thin' we can do for ye?"

"Yes," answered Marie. "We are hungry and cold. Can we have something to eat, and a place to lay our weary heads, sir?"

"Well now, Miss, I'm ashamed of our quarters, but if ye'll accept the best we have, ye are more than welcome," said the Spaniard.

"But," said Marie, as she observed four or five other rough-looking Spaniards on the inside, "I am afraid to enter here."

"You may not be feared, fair lady. We are rough customers here, but we have a sight o' respect for a lady, though," said the Spaniard.

Marie shuddered as she reached out her hand and led the old man inside the shanty.

As the poor girl entered, the Spaniards quickly jumped to their feet, raised their great slouched hats and bowed low. Marie was astonished at the respect they paid her. Recognizing the salute, she passed through the room. Following her director, soon she found herself in a room the walls of which were decorated with bright red cloth arranged in different shapes and forms. Upon this cloth were little pictures of birds and animals in endless varieties. From the ceiling hung the skins of wild animals, artistically arranged in loops, between which could be seen implements of warfare and knives of various shapes and sizes. In one corner of the room was a rustic couch or bed covered with skins of animals, and quilted here and there with bright red cordage. In the centre of the room was the base of a mammoth tree coming up through the floor, one that had been cut off before the shanty was built. The tree was used for a card-table, and upon it were little round pieces of ivory of different colors.

The Spaniard quickly gathered these in his hands as he entered the room.

"This, my lady," said he, "is the only comfortable room there is in the shanty, and if you will accept it I shall see that you and your father are not disturbed." The Spaniard evidently thought the old man was Marie's father.

"Thanks, my dear sir," said Marie. "You do not know how worn out we are. You will protect us from harm, won't you, sir?" said Marie, plaintively. "We are strangers in a strange land. Our home is in Italy, and we are compelled to wander from day to day in search of food and shelter till we reach our native land."

"Have no fear, young woman; you shall be protected;" said the Spaniard, clasping his hand upon the hilt of a knife in his belt, "even though I cut friendship with some one."

The Spaniard closed the door of the room and departed. Marie Lavini and her feeble companion were once more alone in their misery.

"Oh, Paleppi," said the girl, "it will surely be marvellous if all these exposures do not quickly break you down!"

"I am strong," said the old man; "I am strong, Marie; don't worry about me. What matter if I go to-night? I am only a burden to you, my girl, and the sooner I am gone the better."

"I pray of you, Paleppi, to be of good courage for a little while," said Marie. "We surely cannot suffer much longer at the most."

"I will, my girl, I will," said the old man with determination.

"Marie and the old man had been talking of the night's experience, when a rap was heard upon the door, and the voice of the Spaniard asked permission to enter. The old man opened the door, and there stood the Spaniard with a large square board in his hands, upon which was an earthen pot, some earthen mugs, and plates of blue majolica. Having entered, he placed the board upon the table, filled the cups with fluid, and returning, he brought two small fowls. These were served upon sharp sticks which had been whittled for that purpose. One he placed in Marie's hand, and the other in the hand of the old man. Again returning he brought bread and other eatables, until there was enough for a dozen upon the board.

"Now," said the Spaniard, "I hope you may enjoy

the meal my lady, and the old man, too. He looks so feeble, I wonder how he bears the storm so well," continued the Spaniard as he laid his hand affectionately upon the old man's shoulder.

"Oh, he is brave," said Marie. "God will bless you, my dear sir," said the girl with emotion as the Spaniard passed out of the room.

This was the first warm meal Marie Lavini and Paleppi Aggi had eaten in many days; and though roughly served, how refreshing it was! They finished the meal, and Marie then threw herself upon one end of the old bunk, and wrapped a blanket about her person. The old man had removed her shoes, and, together with her wraps, placed them before the log fire to dry, in the room with the Spaniards. Paleppi returned and cautiously crawled into the lower end of the bunk, covering himself with a large fur blanket.

In a short time they were both asleep, and did not awake all day. From time to time the Spaniard would cautiously push open the door and look in upon the beautiful sleeper. Oh, what a beautiful face had this lovely girl! Even the exposures she endured from day to day added, perhaps, to the roses in her cheeks. Her long, dark eyelashes rested softly upon her face, and a sweet, calm smile was upon her lips.

The day had passed; the sky was filled with great black clouds, and night was stealing over the world.

The Spaniard had prepared another meal, and was about to arouse the sleeper, when a powerful rapping was heard on the door of the shanty. Marie awoke as a second pounding came upon the door.

"Who's there?" said the low, gruff voice of the Spaniard.

"It is a Retinelli, in search of his servants," comes the voice from without.

Marie jumped quickly to her feet, and aroused the old man by her side.

"What's up," Marie?" said the old man.

"Hush!" said Marie, placing her fingers across her lips.
"I think Retinelli is here, in search of us."

"O God!" cried the old man, "he is desperate."

"There are no servants here," said the Spaniard as he opened the door of the shanty.

"It's a lie!" shouted the Retinelli. "Her garments are hanging before the log fire," as he pointed his finger at the wraps; "and I demand her as my servant."

A chill passed through the frame of Marie as she heard these words.

"And I refuse to grant your request," said the Spaniard, as he stood erect.

"And do you know that you refuse the request of a Retinelli?"

"I do, sir; and I would as soon refuse the request of a Retinelli as refuse the prattling wishes of a child," said the Spaniard, as his dark eyes flashed in anger.

"Then I shall seize her and drag her from this shanty," said the Retinelli, as he rushed towards the door.

"Stop!" cried the husky-voiced Spaniard, as he seized Retinelli by the shoulder and drew a knife from his belt, "or, by heavens, I'll let loose that soul of yours!"

"I will not stop," came the defiant answer of the Retinelli, he placed his hand upon the latchings of the door.

Suddenly a groan was heard, and then low, muttering voices, growing less and less distinct till they were gone. Marie pushed open the door and stole softly into the ad-

joining room. It was deserted; she stepped to the outer door of the shanty and listened, but no sound came save the moanings of the wind in the tree-tops. Hurrying back to her room, she told Paleppi that the shanty was deserted, and she should leave it at once. Quickly they seized their garments and were gone.

That night a sloop sailed out from the little river, and the body of Retinelli sank into the deep, dark waters of the sea.

## CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

EROLD TROLLUP had at first abruptly refused to join the two Professors in the manufacture of spurious money. But Garcia cunningly called his attention to the fact that unless he willingly consented he should expose him to the authorities at once; he also called Erold's attention to the fact that all the tools, etc., had been shipped to Buena Vista in his name, and that he (Trollup) had arranged for the transportation of the same, and would be held accountable by the authorities for having instruments of this character in his possession. Erold had thereupon consented, and the little shanty at the reserve looked more like a subtreasury than anything else.

As a specialty they were manufacturing five-pound notes and cautiously placing them in circulation. Year after year the business flourished, until Erold and the two Professors had accumulated a large amount of money. The Exchequer had discovered the existence of the artificial bill in circulation, and every possible effort was being made to detect the place of manufacture. No public announcement had been made of the presence of this spurious money, as it was feared the manufacture of it would cease before the guilty parties were detected.

Detectives were upon the alert, and every suspicious business investigated by the authorities.

Garcia still remained in the family of Prof. Wood, and by artful, deceptive ways had sought to gain the affections of Rhea.

She thought Garcia strikingly handsome, and was pleased with his flattering words and handsome face. Yet she loved Erold Trollup too fondly to be carried away by words of flattery. She had promised to become his wife, and happily did she look forward to the time when their destinies were to be united.

Yet season after season passed away, and Rhea had never been able to gain the consent of her father to select a day upon which to be married. Prof. Wood had advised that she should delay the marriage until her thirtieth birthday; even this day had come and gone, and still there was hesitation upon the part of the father to give his consent to the marriage.

Erold had never talked freely with Prof. Wood upon the subject, yet the time had come when he was determined to know the reason why Rhea's father withheld his consent to their marriage.

Prof. Wood of late had looked haggard and careworn, with little or no disposition to be sociable at home or in the shanty. His meals were eaten with no apparent relish, and grave expressions rested constantly upon his face. Mrs. Wood had expressed anxiety about her husband's health, and had finally succeeded in inducing him to call in a physician, who pronounced his condition as really critical, and advised that he should be kept perfectly quiet and free from business responsibilities.

As the physician came from the sleeping-apartment of her husband, Mrs. Wood called him to the door of the drawing-room and said: "You do not consider my husband in a dangerous condition, do you, doctor?"

"I do, most assuredly, Madame," returned the physician.
"I believe he has a serious heart difficulty, which usually

terminates in death sooner or later. I found his pulse-rate very much exhilarated, and very feeble indeed at this call. I shall return in an hour," said the physician, as he passed out of the drawing-room.

Mrs. Wood burst into tears and ran hurriedly up the stairway, about to enter her husband's room, as she saw Rhea and Glasis down the hallway.

"What on earth brings tears to your eyes, mamma?" said Rhea. "The doctor has only just told us that papa was no worse."

"True, my daughter; but your father has a serious disease, and will never recover from this attack."

"Who says this, mamma?" queried Glasis, as she burst into tears.

"The physician so informed me this moment. Still I cannot believe it. Oh, my children, should we be called upon to bear this terrible affliction, then you may soon look for another. Your mother will soon follow."

"Don't say that, mamma. Let us all pray for papa's safe return to health," said Rhea.

At this moment the door-bell sounded, and Erold Trollup entered the reception-room below.

Mrs. Wood had passed into her husband's room, and found him comfortably seated in an arm-chair, and with a sickly smile upon his face to greet his beloved wife.

"Was that the door-bell?" said the Professor.

"I thought so," returned Mrs. Wood.

"Who entered?" asked the Professor.

"I shall see," said his wife. "It was Erold Trollup's voice, I think."

"If so, kindly ask him to come to my room without

delay. Stay one moment," said the Professor. "Is Garcia in the house?"

"I think so," said Mrs. Wood.

"Do not admit him to my presence during my audience with Mr. Trollup. I desire to be alone with him," returned the Professor.

"Very well, my dear husband," said Mrs. Wood; "your wishes shall be carried out to the letter." Mrs. Wood was about going down the stairway in search of Erold, as she saw him, in company with Rhea, seated at the landing of the main stairway.

"Mr. Trollup, my husband desires to see you at once, alone."

In an instant Erold came bounding up the stairway, and taking the hand of Mrs. Wood, spoke a few words of consolation and hurriedly passed into the room. The face of Prof. Wood was as white as marble, and his thin lips trembled with emotion.

"Erold, my boy, I cannot live but a few hours at most, and I wish to let you know the reason I have withheld my sanction to the marriage of my child with you.

"It was because Garcia claimed to be desperately in love with her, and believed in time his affections would be reciprocated. Not a day has passed in all these years that he has not threatened me with exposure if I consented to your marriage. And oh, I could not bear to have my blessed family wear the yoke of my own misdemeanors.

"It is this, Erold, my dear boy, that brings me so soon to my final end. Garcia has tortured me night and day with his devilish threats of exposure if I consented to your marriage with Rhea. During the twelve years we have been engaged in this unlawful business I have had occasion

to know that it has been highly distasteful to you, and that your nature rebelled against it; and even in the midst of our dishonest enterprises I have found you to be frank and honest in all your dealings. And now, Erold, as I am leaving this wretched life of sin and sorrow, I wish to ask two favors of you. Will you grant them?"

"Yes," answered Erold, "if it is in the power of man to grant them."

"The first is that you will, within a week after my death, marry my daughter Rhea, and, together with my poor wife and daughter Glasis, quit England forever; the second, that you will forgive me the evil example I have set before you in the world. Are they granted?" said the husky voice of the dying man.

"They are," said Erold.

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"One word more, Erold, my son. Keep a sharp lookout for this man Garcia. He lives solely to prevent what I have asked you to promise; and oh, should he succed, I shall rise up in my grave but that I foil his devilish plans."

"Never fear," said Erold, "I shall keep my promise." Taking the hand of the dying man, he pressed it to his lips and stole softly from the room.

The doctor, who was in waiting, entered, and taking the wrist of his patient, discovered that life was fast ebbing away. The family were summoned to the bedside of the dying man. Prof. Wood opened his great glassy eyes, and stretching out his arms, pronounced a blessing upon the family.

And so, with a penitent prayer upon his lips, the poor man gave up his soul to God.

## CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

From the night Marie Lavini and the old man left the shanty by the river their sufferings and exposures were hard to bear. From town to town they wandered, side by side, begging sustenance from door to door. In the town of Cueras de Vera, at the foot of the Nevada Mountains, Marie had succeeded in securing employment in a tobacco manufactory at a scanty sum each week. She had arranged for lodgings in the "Spisa Quarters," a large, uncouth tenement lodging-house having separate compartments of rough, unmatched boards.

In each apartment there was a cooking latrobe, a bedstead, and a lock-box, with a few cooking utensils hanging upon the wall. These quarters had been built by the silk merchants of Cueras de Vera for the accommodation of their laborers, and here it was that Marie Lavini and her feeble companion found food and shelter for nearly twelve years. Marie worked each day in the factory, and left Paleppi Aggi in the quarters to prepare their sustenance as best he could.

She had at first devised a bed upon the floor, and resigned all comforts to the dear old man.

Out of her scanty earnings she had succeeded in placing a carpet upon the floor, as well as a small canvas cot in one corner of the quarters for her own comfort.

It was nearing the close of the twelfth year in the "Spisa Quarters," when the tobacco manufactory burned down, and Marie was then thrown out of employment.

The money so saved he had tucked away in one corner of his locker, and never once counted it. On the day of the burning of the manufactory Marie returned at an early hour, and as she stepped inside the "quarters" the old man observed the look of disappointment upon her face.

"What's wrong, Marie?" said the old man, plaintively.

"Oh, nothing serious, Paleppi; only I'm tired of life, and truly do I wish to-day was my last on earth. Every day brings recollections that sadden me so much I sometimes think I must lay down my cross and die."

"Is there some new trouble, Marie?"

"Yes. I am thrown out of employment, Paleppi, and at a time I least expected it. What we shall do I know not. One thing sure, we cannot remain here, and the sooner we leave the better for us."

"But where shall we go?" said the old man, plaintively, as he arose and crossed the room to where Marie was leaning forward with her head upon her hands.

"Where shall we go, Marie?" he asked again, as he laid his hands upon her head.

"Oh, Paleppi, would to God we could go home!" sobbed Marie.

"Yes, my child, there is a home up yonder," pointing his trembling finger to the sky, "where all is peace; and if we both could close our eyes to-night and wake in that bright haven of perfect peace, how happily we might lie down to-night and close our eyes forever to this weary pilgrimage. Marie, you think it best to leave this place to-morrow?"

"Yes, Paleppi. To-morrow is my birthday; and let us wander forth in hopes that brighter things may greet us in this new year of my life. Oh, Paleppi, the recollections

that are this moment passing through my mind of the past, of my home, my former birthdays, my father, and my mother! I cannot bear to think of these, and still they are my only comfort now. Oh that my restless soul might fly to-night into that haven of perpetual rest! Would that each bright flickering star in yonder sky might come and light my weary spirit to my mother's home!"

"Oh, Marie, my child," said the old man, "do not break down now; we may see brighter days soon."

"Forgive me, Paleppi, forgive me; but my heart seemed ready to burst with grief, so I have said too much. You will pardon me, Paleppi. It was only when the remembrances of my former life came back to me that I gave vent to my pent-up emotions. I have tried to be brave, Paleppi; but you know that the stoutest hearts yield to heavy burdens sometimes," said Marie.

"Oh yes, my child. I often wonder at your bravery. You say to-morrow is your birthday. How old to-morrow, Marie?"

"Twenty-seven, Paleppi."

"That's the very luckiest number in the world," answered the old man. "I can surely predict good fortune for you in the coming year of your life. It hardly seems possible that so many years have elapsed since the day we left Gibraltar hand in hand; and yet when I think of the experiences we have passed through, of the humiliations and exposures we have endured, it almost seems a lifetime to me. But, Marie, I shall reluctantly leave the old 'quarters' here that have sheltered us so long. They seemed rough at first; but some way every crack and crevice in this old building smiles upon me now. Yet I suppose we must leave it, as we have left other things that

were dear to us in the past. Yes, Marie, to-morrow we shall pass out from under the roof that has covered us from the wind and storms so many years, and between whose walls we have spent many hours in happiness together."

"True," answered Marie. "It has been our home, Paleppi, these many years, and I shall ever bear it fondly in my memory."

"Marie, when you are sad do you ever feel like singing some old song? It seems a solace to one's mind," said the old man; "and if you will bear with me, I will sing one verse of an old hymn my mother used to sing—it is all I remember now. It was entitled Sweet Star of the Sea."

"I should be delighted to hear it," said Marie.

"And will you assist me?" queried the old man.

"Surely, if I can, Paleppi," said Marie.

The sun had long since disappeared, and the pale silver moon stood out boldly in the sky. It was one of those quiet, beautiful nights so often seen upon the shores of the Mediterranean. The songs of the night-birds in the trees and the distant roar of the sea were the only sounds to be heard. Marie had arranged her chair beside the old man's in the doorway of the "quarters," and held his thin, white, bony hand firmly between her own.

"I'm waiting," said Marie.

In a moment the old man's trembling voice rang out upon the night:

"Deep night hath come down
On us, mother, deep night;
And we need more than ever
The guide of thy light,

For the darker the night is, The brighter should be Thy beautiful shining, Sweet star of the sea."

Oh, mother, mother!" cried Marie, as she stretched forth her hands, "do you forgive your wretched child?"

"What talk is this?" said the old man, as he turned to look Marie in the face.

"Pardon me, Paleppi, but I have seen my mother since you sang those words."

"Why, Marie, you startle me," said the old man, arising. "You talk so strangely."

"Oh, it is nothing, Paleppi; only I have seen my mother's angel face, and I know that she has forgiven me. And now, my dear old man, I am going to make a confident of you. Doubtless you remember a very dear friend of my father's, General Alexander Pachi."

"Oh yes, I remember him," said Paleppi. "He was an officer in the army. I remember him very well indeed."

"Did you ever meet his son?" asked Marie, musingly.

"Yes, I think I met him once," said the old man, with a smile upon his face. "If I remember rightly, he was somewhere between twelve and eighteen inches in length; and such a squalling young man I never met."

"Oh, he was a babe, was he?" said Marie.

"Yes, only a babe; and now to think he is an officer in the army seems passing strange, Marie."

"So it does, Paleppi. But doubtless he is dead now," said Marie, as she burst into tears.

"Why so, Marie?" said the old man.

"Oh, I'm sure he is dead, or I should have heard some-

thing from him or about him. He loved me, Paleppi, with a heart overflowing with kindness and affection, even in his childhood; and I loved him too. His dear, honest face has been ever with me since the fatal night I left the Bay of Naples. Paleppi, you know how many times I have told you the story of the anniversary party at the old castle. Well, I have always omitted one thing, and that was my meeting, upon the river, of William Pachi. was a perfect day, and after a separation of eight long years our young hearts met again. Oh, how I longed to tell him, that day, I loved him! His manly, happy face, though not handsome, was so good and kind, my heart went out to him; but out of foolish pride I suppressed every honest feeling in my nature. Then came the wicked, seductive face of Garcia between us. O my God, what must he have thought of me! But did he know the sufferings I have endured, did he know how faithfully and purely I have preserved a love for him, he would bless me for it if he were alive. As I sit here to-night and think of the playtimes of my childhood, of the sunny fields and pleasant groves around my dear old castle home, it seems to me that I must once more stand under the figtrees where you first saw my face, Paleppi, and look upon the bright green valleys and heaven-kissing hills of the Lavini lands. There was a little whirlpool in the river near the boat-house; it is so vividly fixed in my menory that I can see it all to-night. There sat William upon a great flat stone, whittling little boat-shaped blocks, and tossing them into the angry waters of the whirlpool. Desperately would they struggle for liberty; still the treacherous waters held them captive, and we laughed at their foolish efforts to be free."

"Yes," said Paleppi, "those were happy times indeed. But, my child, if we leave the quarters to-morrow, we should think of sleep. It is a late hour."

"Yes," said Marie. "Heaven knows where we shall sleep to-morrow night. Think of it, Paleppi! Once more we start out to beg and wander through the world. You are so very feeble now, it almost fills me with discouragement when I think of the mountainous country we must pass through."

"Suppose, Marie, we go to Granada first, and there make inquiry regarding the expense of transportation by rail?" said Paleppi.

"It is directly north, and at least twenty miles from Cueras de Vera. Suppose we can pass over the Pyrenees for little or nothing, we are as helpless then as now."

"Oh no, Marie, we are not so helpless as you may imagine," said Paleppi, as he took the lamp from the table. "Come this way, my dear girl; I wish to show you a little keepsake of mine."

He turned a key in the lock, and raised the cover of his locker. Again he raised another smaller cover. "There, Marie, I have been your banker, and here are our savings," said the old man with delight. Marie looked astounded as she reached into the box and lifted a handful of coin, which she allowed to glide through her fingers again. "Paleppi, where on earth did you get this money?" asked the girl.

"I have saved it, Marie, a little each month."

"And how much have you altogether?" asked Marie.

"I have never counted it," said Paleppi. "Let us count it."

So by the flickering lamplight Marie and the old man counted the money which amounted to thirteen crowns.

"Thirteen crowns!" said Marie, as she danced about in delight.

"It is now past midnight, Marie, and will you kindly accept, upon your birthday, this money as a token of love and affection from old Paleppi Aggi?"

Marie did not answer him, but rushing quickly across the room, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him again and again.

That night Marie and the old man retired with happy hearts, and the following morning started by stage coach for Granada.

## CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE friendship existing between Madame Garcia and Signor Lavini had resulted in their marriage four years after the death of Madame Lavini and the closing of Lavini Castle.

The second year after the departure of Meonta Garcia it was currently reported that his body had been found upon the eastern coast of the sea in such an advanced state of disintegration that anything like transporting the remains were entirely out of the question. Madame Garcia had been officially notified of the fact, and, of the two, was greatly relieved to know that her faithless husband was no longer upon the face of the earth.

Signor and Madame Lavini were now living in Naples. The old castle had never been reopened, and Annine, though very advanced in years, was still a domestic in the Lavini family. Signor Lavini had given up nearly all hopes of ever hearing from his daughter again. In fact, it had been reported at the time of the finding of Garcia's body that doubtless Marie Lavini had met the same fate.

Madame Garcia's little son Edward had wound himself into the affections of his foster-father from year to year, and in a large degree had helped to fill the gap made by the loss of his darling child. Yet Signor Lavini never closed his eyes at night without first offering up a prayer that his blessed child might some day be returned to him in safety. Edward Garcia Lavini, as he chose to be called, had now arrived at the age of nineteen years, and was so

near the image of his father that often he startled Madame Lavini as he entered the house hurriedly; yet she had cautiously concealed the fact. In many ways he was like his father, yet, with the training he had received at the hands of Signor Lavini, his manners and habits were perfect.

Signor Lavini had decided to send him to London to perfect himself in a course of medical and surgical study in the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

He had finished one course of study and lectures, and was soon to return for another. His stay in Naples had been full of pleasure unrestrained, and as the day of his departure for England was soon at hand, he felt, perhaps, a little more gloomy than common. The family had dined, and Madame Lavini and her son had stopped before the grate-fire of the library, and sat looking into the glowing embers.

A drizzling rain was falling in the streets, and now and then a footstep upon the pavement outside would rouse them from their reverie. It was withal a dreary night without and within. A fit night, in fact, to speak of dreary things.

Edward had taken the hand of his mother warmly in his own and said:

"You will forgive me if I bring back memories that are painful to you, but, oh! you do not know what a longing I have within me to know something of my father's life. It is the first time in all my life I have ever referred to the subject, more out of consideration for your feelings, my mother, than a lack of interest upon my own part to know something of my dead father. I have patiently waited these many years, hoping that some day you would find it agreeable to yourself to make known something pertaining

to his wretched life. I say wretched life, because, dear mother, you cannot hope that I should attain my present age without hearing the name of my father held up to public criticism. Oh! my mother, many and deep have been the insults I have patiently borne from childhood, not thinking to resent them, for your dear sake. And now I feel that I must hear a truthful history of my father's unfortunate life from your own lips. And as I am soon to leave you, I confidently hope you will grant my request. We may never meet again, dear mother, until we meet in the presence of Him who knows the secrets of all hearts; and then suppose he that was once my father should be standing there, you would not have us meet as strangers, would you, mother? If not then tell me of his life. Oh! tell me that he kissed me once when I was a babe, and you loved him as your husband. Tell me that once he was a good, true, loving husband and affectionate father, and then, dear mother, I will ask no more. The cruel, uncharitable tongue of the world has told me all the bad, and I want to hear from your own dear lips if there was nothing good in him that was once my father."

Before Edward had finished speaking Madame Lavini was sobbing aloud.

"My son, you have asked you know not what, but your question shall be fairly answered. At the time of my marriage to your father he was the most devoted of husbands, and at the time of your birth the fondest of fathers. Yet soon after your birth your father found his pleasures from under the roof of his own household. Night after night he spent in dissipation and debauchery, neglecting your mother even during her convalescence from your birth. The change was like magic, Edward, and soon your father's

life was tainted with the foulest impurities. Day after day I plead with him, I prayed for him, I wept for him, but the iron hand of dissipation refused to loosen its fatal grasp, till bound down with humiliation and indecenies, I bore the burdens of his shameful life patiently, still there was to be an end of it all. One night in autumn twelve years ago, my son, I received a letter from your father in which he said that he had left Naples forever, and that with him he had taken "the object of my jealous frenzy." From that night to this I have never seen his face, nor heard his voice nor have I ever spoken a word reflecting upon him to a living being on this earth. So, Edward, you know it all."

"No, mother, one thing more," said Edward: "who was the person that accompanied him?"

"Marie Lavini, your foster-sister."

"Marie Lavini!" said Edward in anguish. "My God! it cannot be. Oh! mother, say no more; I have heard enough. My heart aches with bitter disappointment at the story you have told. If you could only have left out this last most cruel thing of all! So, then, Marie Lavini is not dead as I have always supposed, but an outcast in the land of the living?"

"No one knows," answered Madame Lavini, "whether she is alive or dead. All these years have passed and no tiding has ever returned from her. At the time she left Naples, Lieutenant William Pachi was desperately in love with her, and doubtless they would have married. Her departure nearly killed him. He was taken severely ill with nervous prostration, and for many weeks his life was despaired of. Finally he partially recovered, and was sent to the headquarters of the Gulf, at Genoa, where he has since

been stationed. Still he never fails to write Signor Lavini at least once a fortnight, and if you were to see his expressions of love for Marie Lavini even now, you would pity him in his sufferings.

"Truly," said Edward, who had only partially heard what his mother had said, his mind being wholly engrossed

in the history of his unfortunate father.

"I have heard," said Madame Lavini, "that Lieutenant Pachi has actually absorbed his entire income in paying the detective service for searches made to ascertain the whereabouts of Marie Lavini; besides, Signor Lavini has offered a standing reward of ten thousand dollars for the recovery of his daughter alive or dead. But after all these years it is extremely doubtful whether any knowledge of her will ever come to light. I did not tell you, Edward, that upon the night of Marie Lavini's departure her poor mother died of grief, and her dear father was for weeks demented."

"No, mother; still I do not wonder at it. How came she to know of it so quickly after Mademoiselle Marie had

gone?" asked Edward.

"Through the stupidity of Phil Aggi, a man-servant, and the poor fellow has travelled the world over in search of his young mistress, who was very fond of him. The last letter Lieutenant Pachi wrote from Genoa was to the effect that poor Aggi had only just been there, asking for funds to continue the search. He believes as firmly now as in the first year of her departure that he will yet find her. He always has some startling news to impart, yet he never leaves Lieutenant Pachi empty-handed."

At this juncture Signor Lavini entered the library, and

after an hour's conversation upon current news of the day, they retired for the night.

Edward knelt that night in earnest prayer that his poor father had not left the world in the midst of his sinful life.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

At the hour of ten the following morning, Marie and Paleppi arrived in Granada and proceeded at once to the station, where they were informed by the station-master that by purchasing first-class accommodations they could reach Toulon the same night, at about midnight or shortly after.

"What is the cost of a single transportation to Toulon?" asked Marie.

"Six crowns," said the agent. "This of course pays the ferriage at the river Rhone, and permits of carrying two hundred pounds of baggage," continued the agent.

"We are not troubled in that direction," said Marie, as she smiled. Before starting from Cueras de Vera that morning Marie succeeded in disposing of what little furniture she had to an inmate of 'Spisa quarters' for another crown, which left 13½ crowns in her pocket after paying their passage in the stage-coach from Granada. The ticketagent had demanded six crowns for a single ticket, or twelve crowns for two.

Marie had seated herself in one corner of the station, and was debating in her mind the most intelligent course to pursue.

Finally she called to Paleppi, who had seated himself beside a large square stove on the opposite side of the room. Twice she had called to him, but no answer came. Marie hastened to where he was seated, and found that he had fallen into a deep sleep.

"Paleppi," said Marie, "I shall purchase two tickets to Toulon. My father had a cousin there, and possibly I may secure assistance from him."

"All right," muttered the old man, and again he was asleep.

Marie purchased the two tickets to Toulon, and had gathered the change in her hand as the agent inquired for her baggage.

"I have none," said Marie.

"What, no baggage? A long journey!" said the agent.

Marie made no reply, but returned to the side of the old man.

"Did you notice that young lady that just purchased tickets for Toulon?" asked the agent of the baggage-master.

"No," said the baggage-man.

"Her manners are not compatible with the clothes she wears," said the agent. "Besides, I noticed in the palm of her hand, as she took the change from the counter, a little cross of diamonds and rubies. It was something costly too. Her face was truly beautiful."

Marie had left the side of Paleppi, and had decided to inquire regarding the distance from Toulon to Naples. She was approaching the ticket-window as she heard the last remark of the agent. Suddenly turning, she stood before a large railway map hanging upon the wall. Instantly her eyes caught sight of the Bay of Naples and all the points along the shore.

Vividly did the scenes of her departure return to her. She stood there gazing, as one would gaze into the errors of her past life, till the tears blinded her eyes and streamed down her face. She had now seen the country through

which she must pass; her eye had measured the distance from Toulon to Genoa, and from there to Naples.

Comparing it with the distance she had travelled, she concluded that Naples must be at least thirty-five hours by rail from Granada. Marie knew that society was at its height at Toulon during the winter months, and now that the helidays were so near at hand, she anticipated no difficulty in securing a position upon her arrival.

She had looked at the great brass time-piece upon the wall, and was turning to awaken Paleppi, as a voice cried, "First-class passengers all aboard! Cartagena, Valencia,

Toulon, and the East!"

Marie hastened to the side of her sleeping companion, and succeeded in arousing him after a somewhat protracted effort. The old man rubbed his eyes and pushed the long gray locks from his forelead. "Come, Paleppi," said Marie, "our train is waiting for us."

"Indeed," said the old man, "that is something new

for us, Marie."

"Decidedly so. But perhaps better things are in store for us now. Who knows?" said Marie.

"Possibly," said the old man, as he trudged along to-

ward the door of the station.

Soon they were comfortably seated in their compartments, and the train was thundering along at a good rate of speed. Station after station was passed, and finally Marie made inquiry regarding something to eat. She was informed by the train-master that at the next station, which was Valencia, the train remained twenty minutes for dinner. Placing her hand in her pocket, she drew forth a handful of coin, and counting it, she found a shilling more than a crown, and selected it to pay for refreshments. The train left Valencia and selected it to pay for refreshments.

lencia, shortly past twelve, and the country which they passed was mountainous and picturesque.

Paleppi had again fallen asleep, and Marie struggled in vain to keep her eyelids from dropping together. From time to time she would open her large, black eyes and dreamily gaze off among the valleys and up the mountain-sides; but practically she was asleep. As the train passed on to the long covered bridge spanning the Ebro with a crashing, thundering sound, Marie and the old man awakened and sat up in their seats. Everything was total darkness.

- "Where are we?" screamed Marie, partially awake, and not able to account for the darkness.
  - "Upon a bridge," came the voice of a stranger.
  - "Are we in danger?" asked Marie, excitedly.
- "Oh no, miss, no danger," said the voice. "We are simply passing under cover for a short distance." Before the stranger finished speaking, the train rushed from under cover.
  - "Thanks," said Marie, who had now awakened to a sense of her surroundings.
  - "Paleppi," said the girl, "you look very pale. Are you not feeling well?"
  - "Not very strong," said the old man. "That bridge gave me a great fright, Marie."
  - "Never mind, Paleppi; we are nearly through with our journey now, I think."

At this moment the train-master entered and cried out, "Rhone River Ferry-house, next station!"

- "How far distant is the city of Toulon?" inquired Marie.
  - "Sixty miles," answered the train-master,

"You see, Paleppi, it will be past midnight before we reach Toulon."

"All right, Marie. I am resting splendidly to-day, Marie," said the old man, who soon closed his eyes again.

Marie sat looking upon the face of her companion. She felt that she could not be mistaken in the great change that had taken place in the appearance of his face. It was ashen white, and a painful, labored expression rested upon his lips, as if the effort of respiration was even too much for him. "It is not to be wondered at," said Marie to herself. "It is indeed strange that the old man has not broken down before. I was cruel to permit him to accompany me through all these exposures; but he was determined to remain with me, and I need not say I should have perished without his words of encouragement. Oh, I pray nothing will happen to this dear old man! I wonder that he sleeps so much to-day. It must be he is ill."

"Your companion looks very feeble," said the stranger in the car seat before her.

"Yes," answered Marie. "But I hope nothing serious has befallen him." At this moment the candles in the cars were lighted. Marie looked out into the darkness, and shuddered as she thought of what might possibly be her lot. Suppose Paleppi should die, what on earth should she do, alone in the world, with but a single crown in her pocket? No, she could not have it so. Placing her hand upon his head, she carefully aroused him. "Paleppi, it is night now," said Marie. "Are you feeling better after your sleep? Can't you talk with me a little while? I am very lonely," said the girl.

"Oh yes, Marie, I am much rested, and feel stronger,"

said Paleppi, as he straightened up in his seat. "Are we nearing the ferry-house?"

"Yes, Paleppi, we shall cross the river in a few moments."

Oh, how happy Marie was to know that her companion had aroused and felt better! She had feared that something dreadful was about to happen, but her fears were now dispelled. The train soon reached the ferry-house, where Marie and Paleppi partook of some coffee and rolls before entering the ferry. A 9:15 the train was again in motion, and at two in the morning they arrived in Toulon. Marie took the hand of Paleppi as they descended from the platform of the cars and walked through the station.

"Which way, Miss?" asked a man who stood with one hand holding open the door of his conveyance.

"I wish to find the home of Count Fabio Lavini."

"Count Fabio Lavini is dead these two years, and his family are in Naples, I believe. Where now, Miss?" said the hackman.

"I do not know," said Marie. "Is there a hospital for the poor in the city?"

"I believe so," said the hackman. "But we don't carry beggars for a living," grunted the rough, ugly man, as he mounted his conveyance and drove away.

"No," said Marie, "there is no conveyance for a beggar in the world, save the hearse that bears his body to Potter's Field."

"Let us be seated in the station a moment, Marie," said Paleppi, "until we can decide upon the best course to pursue."

"I am decided, Paleppi. For twelve long years we have

suffered insults, exposures, and everything but death; and now I am determined to reach Naples at the earliest possible moment," said Marie, with decision. "God knows I have done penance enough for my sins, and my proud heart will no longer bear the insults and reflections of the world. I had thought never to return; and even now I may go to look upon the demented face of my poor father; but I shall find him, Paleppi, if he is in the land of the living, and he shall know from my lips what we have suffered together."

"But how shall we ever reach Naples, my dear child?" said the old man, with tears in his eyes. "Our funds are already exhausted, and, Marie, I feel my strength is fast leaving me. I fear I shall reach my everlasting home before many days," sobbed Paleppi.

"God forbid!" sighed Marie.

"My strength may come again, my child, but I feel such a terrible inward sinking, Marie, as if some lurking disease were gnawing away my life. Oh, I have struggled to keep this trouble from you, Marie, but I can hide it no longer. My strength is failing me; and I thought it best that you should know it in making your future arrangements. Marie, my child," said the dear old man as he raised his wrinkled, careworn face, "when you reach Naples say to Signor Lavini that old Paleppi Aggi befriended you to the end of his life. Say to him, Marie, that I made your burdens as light as I could, and that I was faithful to the last."

"Say no more, Paleppi," sobbed Marie, "or my poor heart will break. You will go to Naples, Paleppi. You must go home with me."

"No, Marie, I shall go home alone; but I shall wait for

your coming, my blessed child. And when we wander forth again, Marie, I hope it will be in the fields elysian, where the lights of heaven shall smile upon us, and where the voices of God's rich and poor shall join in the chorus round his celestial throne."

"You do not feel that you are soon to die, do you, Paleppi?" pleaded Marie, tremblingly.

"Oh no, my child, I shall not die to-night, I hope; yet I cannot last long. I am so weak I cannot get my breath without the greatest effort," said he.

- "I wonder if stimulants would help you, Paleppi?"
- "I know not, Marie."
- "Let us try," said the girl.
- "But where can you get it at this hour of the night?" asked the old man.
- "I will get it," said Marie, as she was about leaving the station-house.
- "Stop, Marie!" cried Paleppi, as he raised his arm, "I would rather die than have you search the streets this hour of the night for stimulants. Besides, it is dangerous."
- "Then I shall call the depot-master," said Marie, as she went bounding out of the room.

Soon the depot-master arrived with a bottle of brandy and some refreshments in the way of sandwiches, fruit, etc.

- "Why," said the old man, with a look of astonishment on his face, "I am blessed with good friends to-night."
- "Truly," returned Marie, as she held a handful of money before her companion's eyes. "That is money, Paleppi, and enough to give us a lodging here and carry us to Genoa to-morrow."
- "Thank God!" said Paleppi. "I am so tired, I did not see how I could travel farther to-day."

He had taken the brandy and finished a small sandwich, when the depot-master returned with the balance.

"Who gave you the money, my child?" asked Paleppi.

"I borrowed it from the depot-master, and left my ring as security for it," answered Marie.

"Oh, I'm so sorry you did that, Marie!" exclaimed Paleppi. "I could have gone without the brandy."

"Do not speak of it, Paleppi. It was a birthday gift, and now it serves another gift upon my birthday."

Marie had arranged with the depot-master to escort them to a respectable hotel, where Paleppi and Marie remained until the following day at five. All through the night and day Paleppi found it necessary to take frequent draughts of brandy, which for a time would relieve him of his excessive prostration.

They took the train at 5 P. M. the following day for Genoa. Marie had caused the brandy bottle to be again refilled, as the old man had emptied the flask before the station was reached.

It was nine o'clock in the evening of the 24th day of December, as Marie Lavini and her poor, old, feeble companion walked out of the depot-yard. The wind had risen and was blowing coldly from the west. People were passing hurriedly through the streets, parcels in their hands, and in many windows could be seen little, flickering lights that looked like diamonds.

"Paleppi," said Marie, "do you know it is Christmas eve?"

There came no answer.

"Paleppi," said Marie again with emphasis, "do you know it is Christmas eve?"

Still no answer. The old man stopped and clutched the

iron rods of the fence beside him, swaying first one way, then the other, for a moment; then he fell upon the pavement.

"My God! Paleppi," cried Marie in anguish, "what can I do?"

"Nothing, my child. I have—lost—my—breath, Marie. I—am—dying," said the dear old man.

As Marie knelt beside her faithful friend and pressed her lips upon his brow, she heard the sound of voices as if chanting a hymn for the dying. Listening closer, she thought it came from within the building beside her. Wildly she rushed through an open doorway, and was about to scream out in despair, when she observed that she was in the midst of the vesper service of the cathedral. Quietly but quickly she passed down the long, dark side aisle to the altar.

"Pray, sir," said Marie to some one kneeling beside the great stone pillar that supported the choristers above, "my poor old friend is dying in the streets. Will you assist me, sir?"

"Dying! child," said the man, as he excitedly arose.

"Yes, sir," said Marie; "beside the very doorstep of the cathedral."

In a moment the body of Paleppi Aggi was carried down the main aisle of the cathedral; and there before the altar of his God, as the little angel voices of the choristers sang out an 'Ave Marie,' the soul of this poor old man returned to its Maker.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

THE funeral of Prof. Marion Wood took place from the Church of the Redemption on Sunday, and was largely attended.

On Wednesday of the same week, much to the astonishment of every one, an announcement appeared in the *Times* of the marriage on the following Saturday at 10 A. M. of Miss Rhea Wood and Mr. Erold Trollup at the Church of the Redemption.

It being a very unusual occurrence, much curiosity was excited throughout their entire circle of acquaintance. At the hour of ten, on Saturday, the church was filled to overflowing, and the wedding march was being rendered most beautifully as the bride and bridegroom passed down the aisle. The bride's costume was strikingly in contrast with the one she had worn to the funeral of her father on the Sunday previous. But Rhea had complied with her father's dying request. It was not to please herself, but to gratify a strange wish her father had expressed but a few hours prior to his death. The bridesmaids had arranged her toilet in a very becoming way, and Rhea Wood was a lovely picture to behold.

Her tall, stately form and graceful carriage were in keeping with her dress; her face, however, looked sad, yet there was a forced smile upon it. Erold Trollup looked grave and serious, yet his manly face and gentle manner won the admiration of all present. The clergyman, the

Rev. William Manning, appeared before the altar, and the ceremony was about to be performed, when a bustle and noise were heard at the entrance of the church. Loud talking and a general commotion ensued, as an officer came walking down the aisle, and placing his hand upon the shoulder of Erold, said, "Trollup, I arrest you, sir, in the name of the Queen." In an instant Rhea Wood fell senseless upon the carpet.

Erold was quickly by her side with words of comfort and consolation. "Forgive me the humiliation I have caused you, Rhea," said Erold, as he raised the beautiful girl from the floor. "I shall prove my innocence," said he, "and beyond any question of doubt."

"Come, come!" said the officer, "let us close this disagreeable scene; the sooner the better, young man."

"Good-by, Rhea, my darling," said Erold, as he burst into tears and kissed her a passionate farewell. Mrs. Wood bore up bravely under the trying ordeal, and was holding Rhea's head upon her breast, when Glasis rushed wildly down the aisle and, in a towering rage, demanded the name of Erold's accuser.

"His name is Garcia Paralotti," said the officer.

"I thought so," said Glasis. "Garcia is his accuser," she continued, as she returned to her sister's side. "Be calm, Rhea," said Glasis; "there is something wrong about all this, and we shall speedily know more about it."

Out of respect to the family, the guests quickly dispersed and the wildest excitement prevailed throughout. The clergyman arranged for the appearance of Mrs. Wood's equipage, and the family returned home. As the carriage arrived at the stepping-stone, Paralotti came down the

stairway of the mansion and stood at the door of the equipage.

"How dare you show your wicked face at such a time as this?" said Glasis, white with rage. "I hate and despise you, and not another instant shall you remain under the roof of Marion Wood's home!"

"Be calm, girl," said Garcia; "listen to explanations."

"No, I will not, you cowardly rascal! We shall see how well you explain yourself in a court of justice," said Glasis.

Rhea and her mother had immediately entered the house, and going to their sleeping-apartments, wept bitterly. After Glasis had finished speaking to Paralotti, she rushed up the stairway to her mother's room and said: "Do you propose to allow that villain Paralotti to remain another hour under our roof? If so, Glasis Wood will leave this house forever."

"You are hasty, Glasis. Is it not better that we should investigate this unfortunate affair before taking positive action with this man Paralotti?"

"No," said Glasis. "Shall this cowardly wretch share the hospitalities of our home, while poor Erold Trollup remains behind prison bars? In your name I shall dismiss him," said Glasis, as she closed the door behind her, and was gone.

Glasis Wood opened the door of the drawing-room below, just as Paralotti had seated himself by the window. "In the name of my mother, I demand that you shall leave this house at once, Prof. Garcia Paralotti," said Glasis.

"I shall comply with the request at once, Miss Wood; but, truly, you are dealing harshly with one who has striven to save your family name from reflections," said Garcia.

"Why did you not impart all this information before

the hour of my sister's marriage?" said Glasis, whose searching eyes were riveted upon him.

"Because," said Garcia, hesitatingly, "I did not know it until the very moment of the marriage."

"Well, we shall see," said Glasis. "I have delivered the instructions of my mother."

"And I shall comply with them," said the Professor, as he arose to depart.

"Good-by, Glasis," said Paralotti; "I hope you will reconsider your actions."

Glasis said nothing, but waited in the reception-room till Paralotti had passed out. She then turned the key in the lock, and stepping to the door of the servants' room, ordered her mother's carriage to be in readiness post-haste.

Glasis returned to her mother's room, where Rhea, was still sobbing aloud. "Rhea," said she, "I have ordered the carriage, and am going to the station-house, in King William Street, to ask the privilege of an interview with Erold Trollup. I hardly think it discreet for you to go, but shall I deliver any message from you?"

"Yes," said Rhea, "wait till I pen him a few lines. I am sure he is innocent."

"Innocent?" said Glasis. "You are cruel if you permit a single doubt to enter your mind of anything criminal in the conduct of Erold Trollup."

Mrs. Wood entered the room, and said: "Glasis, a carriage is at the door; kindly inform all callers that I am not to be seen."

"Very well," said Glasis.

Rhea had seated herself at the writing-table, and, with tears streaming down her face, wrote the following lines:

"MY DARLING EROLD: Let nothing that has happened

to-day cause you one moment's pain or suffering. Whether you be innocent or guilty of the charges preferred against you, be assured that I love you, Erold, with a love so fixed that circumstances cannot affect it; and as you sleep to-night behind the prison walls, look up and you shall see the face of Rhea Wood bending over you; listen and you shall hear her prayerful petition for your liberty. Be hopeful as I am, Erold, and one day we shall be united in the most perfect and unmolested happiness. God bless you and keep you safe from harm!

"Your true and devoted wife, RHEA."

Glasis took Rhea's letter, and was soon on the way to the station-house: Meeting the captain of the police in the doorway of the station-house, she asked permission to speak with Mr. Trollup.

"In the course of a few minutes," said the captain, "as soon as Mr. Trollup's counsel arrives. You may speak to

him in the presence of his counsel."

"Thanks," said Glasis; "I will wait."

"Step right into the office, lady," said the officer stand-

ing by.

Glasis stepped into the office and took a seat beside the desk. Soon Lawyer Coyne, a distinguished criminal lawyer of the King's Bench, arrived and asked to see Mr. Trollup.

"Are you Mr. Trollup's attorney?" asked Glasis.

"He sent for me," answered the attorney.

"I have the permission of the captain to visit Mr. Trollup in your presence," said Glasis.

"Your name, please?"

"My name is Glasis Wood, a sister of Rhea Wood, Mr.
Trollup's intended wife."

"Indeed," said the lawyer. "You don't know how sorry I am that this unfortunate circumstance has occurred, but I trust it can all be quickly adjusted. Let us go in," continued the attorney, as he requested an officer to unlock the door.

The door of the prison corridor was unlocked, and both entered. Coyne passed along from cell to cell, peering into each one as he passed; finally the hand of Trollup reached out from between the black iron bars.

"Mr. Coyne," said Erold, "I am a prisoner upon my wedding-day, and, in one sense, I am guilty."

"Stop!" said the lawyer, as he pressed his finger to his lips. "Not so loud, Trollup; talk to me, not to all the inmates of the jail."

"I would as soon the world should hear my statement," said Trollup.

Glasis had kept out of sight, but stood listening with her hand back of her ear, and was delighted at the remarks of Trollup.

"Make your statement as concise as possible," said the lawyer, "avoiding all useless explanations."

"Very well," said Trollup. "On the seventh of September, twelve years ago, I received a letter from Prof. Marion Wood, of the Academy, addressed to me at Cossington post-office, to come on the following day to London; that he desired to introduce me to an Italian Professor who was about to open a school of mines."

"Have you that letter in your possession?" asked the lawyer.

"It may be among my papers somewhere," said Erold.

"Proceed," said the lawyer.

"Well, on the day after the receipt of that letter I came to

London, met the Professor in question, and after a lengthy interview I was told by both Professors that they had discovered some valuable quartz upon the banks of the Oneta River, and that the fact of the discovery had been kept a secret for many years. They said further that it was their desire and intention of locating a 'shanty' somewhere on the river to do the assaying and smelting, and develop the country. Prof. Wood said to Garcia that he had selected me because my home was on the banks of the Oneta River. I then informed the Professors that my father had a shanty built at Buena Vista, and one I thought would be suitable for the purpose. This met their approval, and they directed me to return home at once and obtain the consent of my father to permit of the enterprise. I called that day upon Rhea Wood at Prof. Wood's house, and told her of the nature of the enterprise; but in accordance with the request of the Professors I asked Rhea to say nothing about it. I returned according to agreement on the following day, with full permission from my father to carry on an assaying and smelting works at Buena Vista. Prof. Garcia showed me a box and said it was full of smelting tools, and directed me to send it by rail, in my own name, to Buena Vista. Innocently I sent the box. The third day after the arrival of this box Garcia and Wood came to the shanty at night and made known to me their intention of making spurious money. I positively declined to have anything to do with the enterprise; but Garcia said that unless I consented he would expose me at once. He called my attention to the fact that the box contained counterfeiting tools instead of assaying instruments, as I had supposed; that I had marked and shipped it in my own name from London to Cossington. And this desperate rascal frightened me into giving my consent to embark in the business."

"Mr. Trollup, is there any writing in existence by which you can throw a shadow of indorsement upon your statement?" said the attorney.

"None, unless some letters should be found in Prof. Wood's portfolio that were written by Garcia while in Naples," answered Erold.

Glasis had no sooner heard the remark than she left the corridor, and placing her sister's note, together with one she hurriedly wrote Coyne (to the effect that she wished him to call at the house immediately after his interview with Trollup) in the hands of an officer, directed him to deliver them at once to Coyne. She left the prison and requested the driver to drive her home as soon as possible. When Glasis reached her home, she ran up to her mother's room, and said: "Mamma, have you the keys to papa's portfolio?"

"Yes, my child," said Mrs. Wood. "Why do you ask?"

"Because every hope Erold Trollup has of getting his release lies in papa's portfolio."

"What do you mean, Glasis?" asked the mother, excitedly.

"Don't ask me to explain myself, now, only give me the keys to my poor father's portfolio," said Glasis.

Soon the mother returned with the keys, and Glasis rushed down to the library.

Drawer after drawer was pulled out and emptied of its contents. After every paper had been removed from the portfolio, Glasis seated herself upon the floor beside the pile.

Paper after paper was opened and read. Finally she saw

a shiny leather bag, bearing a ticket upon which was printed the name of Prof. Marion Wood, also the word "Private." Glasis seized it, and untied the great black cord around it. The first paper she unfolded was a cablegram to her father, signed "Meonta Garcia," asking for answers to correspondence. The next was a letter from "Meonta Garcia," asking why her father did not more promptly answer his letters. The third, fourth, and fifth were letters pertaining to Meonta Garcia's arrangements to leave Naples. The seventh letter was the document Glasis most wished to find. It read as follows:

"Naples, August 25, 18—.

"My DEAR Wood: Yours of the 12th at hand. The arrangements you have made regarding the manufacture of 'spurious' are perfect, and meet my approval entirely. You omitted to say how far Buena Vista was located from London, and whether you had actually succeeded in securing the consent of Mr. Erold Trollup to embark in the business, under pretence of assaying and smelting, or not, but I can arrange all that upon my arrival in London. Make sure of the place, and I will make sure of Trollup.

"I expect to leave Naples with my wife one week from to-day. She knows nothing of the scaly business. When you meet us, be guarded. I shall bring all necessary woodcuts and electrotyping apparatus. I shall not write again. Be sure and destroy all correspondence.

"In haste, sincerely your friend,

"MEONTA GARCIA."

Glasis folded this letter closely and tucked it in her bosom. She was so animated over its discovery, and so anxious to release poor Erold, that she had started through

the drawing-room, and was just passing into the reception-room as the door-bell sounded. Glasis opened the door, and was delighted to see Mr. Coyne, Erold's attorney.

"Walk in," said Glasis. "I have a letter for you, Mr. Coyne."

Drawing the letter from her bosom, she placed it in the hands of the attorney, who quickly glanced over it and said:

"This letter is signed 'Meonta Garcia;' the accuser's name is Paralotti. Something strange here," said the attorney. "Miss Wood, have you any of this man Paralotti's handwriting in the house?"

"Yes," said Glasis. "Please step in the library. I saw an essay written by him as I was looking over the papers in search of this letter, to-day."

Coyne stepped into the library, and Glasis began pulling over the pile of papers.

"One moment," said the attorney; "were there any papers in company with this letter?"

"Yes," said the girl. "There was a collection of private papers in a leather bag. Here it is," said Glasis, as she gave it to the attorney.

Coyne opened the bag, and cast his eyes first upon one paper, then upon another, while Glasis was in search of the essay.

"Any further search on your part is unnecessary," said Coyne. "I have all the papers I need to fix guilt upon Garcia Paralotti."

Glasis could not help seeing how nervous the attorney seemed as he uttered these words.

"You seem quite interested in poor Mr. Trollup," said Glasis.

"I am indeed," answered the attorney. "And he shall not long suffer the confinement of the prison-house."

"Now, young lady, I shall leave these papers in your possession," said the lawyer, sternly, "with the express understanding that not even your family shall know of their contents, until I return in an hour."

"Very well," returned Glasis, as she took the papers and placed them in her pocket.

Lawyer Coyne left the house, and decided to be driven at once to police headquarters.

"Unless I am mightily mistaken," said he to himself, "there is a reward of ten thousand dollars offered by an Italian nobleman for the recovery of 'Meonta Garcia,' and I think there is a placard in the gallery to that effect."

As soon as his carriage arrived at headquarters he stepped leisurely out, and lighted a cigar in the office, not wishing to excite curiosity. After a few moments he stepped up the stairway with an air of indifference, and opened the door of the "Rogues' Gallery." Walking down the gallery a few paces, he saw the face of Paralotti, above which were the words, "Ten thousand dollars reward by an Italian nobleman for the recovery of Meonta Garcia, of whom this picture is a true likeness." The picture was a lithographic production, setting forth his face with sidebeard and mustache. Garcia had caused the removal of the side-beard, but there was no mistaking the face. Coyne walked carelessly down the stairway, entered his carriage, and was driven to the house of the Woods.

Glasis met him at the door.

"Any news?" said she.

"Nothing particular," said Coyne; "only I had other business engagements that I wished to have off my mind,

No.

that I might give my undivided attention to the care of Mr. Trollup."

It was now past six in the evening, and a cold, snowy night. The holidays had passed, but no snow had fallen till the night in question. Glasis and the attorney seated themselves before the grate-fire in the drawing-room.

- "Have you the letters?" said Coyne.
- "Certainly," returned Glasis.
- "Will you kindly read the one pertaining to Garcia's fictitious name, Miss Wood? My eyesight is very defective at night."

"With pleasure," returned Glasis, who opened the letter

and read:

"Naples, June 3, 18-.

"My DEAR Wood: I have decided to add the word 'Paralotti' to my name in England, and my wife has consented to the change. I do this because my name, in connection with the university here, has become quite well known at home and abroad, and in case we should be so unfortunate as to be detected in our hazardous business, no reflection can fall upon my family name. We are all well here. I am slowly but surely making arrangements to leave for England late in the season. Write when you can.

Truly your friend,

"MEONTA GARCIA."

- "Yes," said Coyne, with an air of satisfaction, "he is the man, without a single doubt."
  - "He is what man?" said Glasis.
- "Why," said the attorney, "he is the man that must answer the charge of manufacturing spurious money."
  - "One thing," Mr. Coyne: "is there no possible way of

giving Erold Trollup his freedom without publishing to the world the guilt of my poor father?"

The attorney reflected a moment, and said:

"I shall require time to think of that, Miss Wood. It seems quite impossible now. But perhaps something may develop to permit of it."

"Has Garcia any money?" asked the attorney.

"He must have money," said Glasis. "His wardrobe is very complete; besides, his habits have been of the most

extravagant character."

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"Miss Wood, I shall have this man Garcia arrested tonight upon suspicion of being implicated in the manufacture of spurious money. I have another charge against
him, and possibly I shall succeed in accomplishing Mr.
Trollup's release from prison on Monday next, the day of
examination. I have a scheme in my mind, Miss Wood,
and should it terminate successfully, Mr. Trollup will be
released and your family name shall remain untarnished."

"Let us pray that you may be successful," said Glasis,

excitedly.

"Do you know where Garcia is stopping?" asked the lawyer.

"I do not," returned Glasis, "but he frequently dines

at the 'Transatlantic.'"

Coyne bade the young lady good-night, and departed. Glasis met Rhea in the drawing-room, and informed her that on Monday the preliminary examination of her affianced would take place. Coyne proceeded to have a warrant issued for the arrest of Garcia Paralotti, and at the hour of ten that night found him, in company with a party of gentlemen, in the saloon of the "Transatlantic."

He was promptly arrested by an officer, and brought to police headquarters, where Coyne was awaiting his arrival.

"Who is my accuser?" said the Italian, "and with what am I charged?"

"I am your accuser," said Coyne, as he arose from his chair, "and have caused your arrest upon suspicion that you are connected with a band of counterfeiters."

"It is false!" growled the Italian, as his black eyes flashed in anger.

"I hope it may so be proved," said the lawyer, coolly.

Garcia Paralotti was locked in a cell, and the attorney asked that he might be permitted to speak with him alone for a moment only; that he had something to communicate of personal interest to the accused. The request was granted, and Coyne entered the prison corridor. He stopped in front of Paralotti's cell.

"Mr. Paralotti," said Coyne, "I am the attorney for Mr. Trollup, and in the midst of certain investigations I have ascertained that your name is not Paralotti, but Meonta-Garcia of Naples, Italy, and that you are charged with having disposed of the person of one Marie Lavini, a gentleman's daughter of Naples."

Garcia was white as death, and a look of pain rested upon his face. "Who is your informant?" said the husky voice of the Italian.

- "A letter written by your own hand and found among the papers of Prof. Marion Wood," answered the lawyer.
  - "Curse him!" grunted the Italian.
- "Now, sir," said the lawyer, "on one consideration I will keep this knowledge from the authorities."
  - "Name it," said Garcia.
  - "It is this: that on Monday next, the day set aside for the

examination, you will plead guilty to the charges hanging over the head of Erold Trollup; that you will exonerate him from all blame, and write your check, payable to my order, for the sum of two thousand pounds, the amount offered by an Italian nobleman for the recovery of Meonta Garcia. Further," said the lawyer, "that you promise never to divulge the fact that Marion Wood was engaged with you in the manufacture of spurious money."

"No," growled the Italian.

"Then, sir, I shall deliver you up to the Italian minister before daybreak," said the lawyer, as he arose to depart.

"Stop!" said the Italian, who had reflected upon the loss of Marie Lavini, and knew that death awaited him in Italy, "I will comply with your request, sir."

"Very well," said the lawyer. "I shall have a blank check in readiness for your signature Monday morning in the court-room."

Coyne left the prison just as the clock in the cathedral sounded the midnight hour, and proceeded to his bachelor quarters in the Hotel de Ville, where he retired, well pleased with the accomplishments of the day. The next day, Sunday, was cold and dreary without and within. Erold had not closed his eyes all night long. The prison watch had placed a book in his hand at midnight, but his wandering mind would not permit him to forget his misery for a single moment. He had refused all meals, and told the watch that only a few days of that confinement would surely kill him. At about the hour of ten in the forenoon Erold's father had come to see him, but was refused admittance. The home of the Woods was desolate indeed, Rhea and her mother cried and sobbed all day,

while Glasis occupied her time investigating every scrap of paper in her father's library desk.

Garcia had slept soundly all night and most of the day. At the time of his illness upon the ship he had contracted the opium habit, and always had in his possession little pills of morphine. On the night of his arrest he had taken three pills upon retiring, and was stupefied all the following day.

Sunday night a misty rain fell, and as the sun rose on Monday morning the earth looked like a sea of ice. The air was cold and bracing, and but few people were passing in the streets. The examination of young Trollup had formed the chief topic of conversation, and the publication of the hour and place had appeared in the *Times* on Saturday.

The court-house was filled to overflowing long before the hour announced for the examination. Suddenly a noise and confusion was heard, as Erold Trollup entered, in company with an officer; but a few steps behind him came Rhea, leaning upon the arm of her mother, and Glasis, in company with Mr. Coyne, the attorney. As Erold entered the door a deafening shout of applause fairly shook the court-room.

Mr. Coyne arranged chairs for Rhea, Mrs. Wood, and Glasis.

The Rev. Mr. Manning had also arrived, and seated himself beside one of the attorneys for the government. Soon Garcia entered, and to the surprise of every one present, was also accompanied by an officer. As Garcia passed where Rhea was sitting, their eyes met, and a look of scorn was upon her face. At the hour of ten one of the judges arose and called out the name of Garcia Paralotti.

- "I am here," answered the Italian.
- "Arise," said the judge, "and make known your accusation against the prisoner in the box."

Garcia had arisen, and fixed his dark eyes upon Coyne.

"I have no accusation to make," said the Italian. "I alone am guilty. This young man was employed by me in the manufacture of spurious coin, and I sought his ruin." Before the Italian had finished speaking deafening cheers filled the court-room, and everything was excitement and confusion.

"Silence!" cried the court, as the judge arose and sentenced the Italian to close confinement and hard labor for the term of seventeen years.

Garcia cast his eyes upon the floor, and with an officer by his side he left the court-room.

The judge remained standing, and, turning to the prisoner in the box, said: "Mr. Trollup, let this be a lesson to you in your future life: that you will forever be known by the company you keep. You are now dismissed from custody."

Rhea Wood rushed into the arms of her lover, and there, before the tribunal of justice, Rhea Wood and Erold Trollup were made man and wife.

## CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

Passing along one of the thoroughfares of Genoa on a bleak December day could have been seen a hearse bearing the remains of poor old Paleppi Aggi to Charity Fields. But a short distance back of the hearse came a covered carriage bearing Marie Lavini, a solitary mourner. The little cortège had left the cathedral at an early hour, and was nearing the terrace upon which rested a mammoth statue of Amerigo Vespucci.

Marie was impressed with the grandeur of it, and had placed her head outside the window of the cab to more perfectly inspect its huge proportions, as a sharp, shrill voice cried out, "Marie Lavini, my God!"

In an instant Phil Aggi pounced upon the steps of the cab, and quickly forcing open the door of the conveyance, threw his arms around her neck. Relinquishing his hold, he grasped her hands and kissed them again and again. "Marie, O Marie!" cried Phil, "where in all this world have you been? O my mistress, my mistress, if you knew the nights and days I have wandered, hungry and cold, looking for you; if you knew how I have prayed that God would bless me with a chance to find you, you would pity me, Marie. O my dear mistress, I have found you at last!" cried Phil, as the tears streamed down his face.

Marie had not uttered a word. A sharp pain was gnawing at her heart as she looked upon the haggard, care-worn face of poor Phil Aggi.

"Why don't you speak, my mistress? Why don't you speak and say, 'Phil, you have done well; God bless you'?"

In an instant the whole volume of Marie's pent-up emotions burst forth like the bursting of a summer cloud.

"Forgive me, Phil Aggi, forgive me!" she cried aloud. The face of Phil Aggi brought remembrances of the past. O, how the poor girl's brain reeled as the thought of home and friends passed through her mind! "Phil, O Phil, answer me: is my father yet alive?"

"Yes, alive and well," said Phil, "and-"

"Stop," cried Marie, "say not another word, but clasp your hands with me, Phil, and thank the merciful God that has preserved his life till he shall look once more upon the face of Marie Lavini, as pure and undefiled as the day she left her father's roof; that he shall listen to her words and know the sufferings and deprivations she has endured for virtue's sake. And now, O Phil, again will I beg your forgiveness, before I tell you the destination of the conveyance we are in. This carriage, Phil, makes up the funeral train of him who was your father. "Tis with hallowed lips I speak his name."

"My father?" said Phil; "you do not mean it!"

"Yes, Phil; in yonder hearse lies the peaceful body of Paleppi Aggi. His pure white soul is in the sky, beyond the reach of earthly taint."

"How came he here?" said Phil, as his lips breathed

forth a prayer for the soul of his beloved father.

"He has been my companion, Phil, for twelve long, weary years; we have faced the storms and exposures of a beggar's life. You have not suffered alone, Phil; by day and by night we have battled on together. He was faithful till the last breath of life departed from his body."

"Thank God, Marie, thank God!" cried Phil.

The carriage had stopped, and the driver had opened the

door. Phil stepped to the ground, and assisted Marie to alight. Arm-in-arm they followed all that was earthly of their blessed father and comrade to his last resting-place. There was no gilded coffin, no surpliced priests, nor costly train to follow the poor remains of the dear old man, but from beside the grave went up to God that day two prayers as pure as were ever offered; and over the head of Paleppi Aggi, in after-years, rested a stone fitting to his memory.

Phil Aggi and Marie re-entered the carriage, when Marie told the story of her sufferings and exposures. Phil cried and sobbed like a little child from time to time.

"But, Marie, you say you are penniless now."

"Yes, Phil; the sisters of St. Ann at the cathedral have given me food and shelter for the past three days, and I cannot expect them to give me further assistance," said Marie.

"No, Marie, you will have no further need of assistance here," said Phil. "I have friends who will, at the least, provide for our return to Naples; and if you will remain at the convent of St. Ann for one hour, I shall return prepared to assist you."

"O Phil, it seems like yesterday we were out upon the shining waters of the Tibez, listening to the sweet songs of birds, and basking in the glorious sunshine, like the seafowl upon the wave; yet twelve long years have passed, and I suppose my father's face, together with your own, are all that is left to greet me as I go home."

"Oh no, my mistress," said Phil with emotion. "But here we are at the convent. One hour, and I shall return to gladden your poor heart and tell you all about Lavini Castle. So good-by," said Phil, as he jumped upon the seat with the driver, and they were gone.

As soon as they had passed the convent Phil informed the driver that he wished to be carried post-haste to the headquarters of the Gulf.

- "O man," said the driver, "that's two miles from here."
  - "Never mind," said Phil, "how far it is."
- "But who will pay for the conveyance?" asked the driver.
- "An officer at the quarters," said Phil. "He will buy the conveyance, if necessary, when he hears the message I bear him."
- "Very well," said the driver, "if you know it is all right."

Soon the carriage stood in front of the officers' quarters.

- "Who's wanted?" asked the sentinel.
- "Lieutenant William Pachi," said Phil, hardly able to wait a moment.
  - "Ring the third bell," said the sentinel.

Phil rang the bell with emphasis, and a colored servant appeared.

- "Does Lieutenant Pachi reside here?" said Phil.
- "He does," said the servant.
- "Is he in?" asked Phil, so excited he had walked past the servant.
  - "I think so. Step right upstairs," said the servant.

Lieutenant Pachi had heard the noise in the hall below, and had just that moment opened the door of his room. Phil saw him, and rushing into his room, exclaimed:

- "Lieutenant Pachi, Marie Lavini is at the convent of St. Ann, awiting your arrival."
  - "My God!" gasped Pachi, "it cannot be!"
  - "Yes, it is," said Phil; "and she is as pure as the day

she left her father's roof;" rubbing his hands in breathless anxiety.

"Who told you that?" said the lieutenant, with a smile, as he quickly penned a line to the commanding officer of the post, asking for a hasty leave.

"She told me herself," said Phil, "and I believe her before any mortal on the face of the earth."

"All right, Phil," said the lieutenant, who passed downstairs and placed the note he had written in the hands of an orderly, to be at once delivered to the commanding officer. Returning to his room, he made a hasty toilet, and was soon seated in the cab. Phil saw the orderly coming down the gravelled walk in front of the quarters towards the carriage, with the message from the commanding officer in his hand. Soon the carriage was in motion.

"Phil," said Lieutenant Pachi, "how on earth did you find Marie Lavini?"

"I cannot tell you how," returned Phil, "but when I found her I will explain. As I was returning from the office of the Gulf Line of steamers, early this morning, I stopped a minute at the foot of the terrace statue in the square, and was about to move on as I noticed the charity hearse coming across the square. Behind the hearse came a covered cab, in the window of which I noticed a lady's face."

Here Phil stopped speaking, and his eyes filled with tears. Lieutenant Pachi had not noticed the face of Aggi.

"Well," said the lieutenant, "who was in the cab, Phil?"

"Marie Lavini," sobbed Phil; "and in the hearse was the dead body of my dear father."

"Your father?" said the lieutenant, with emphasis.

"Yes, Lieutenant Pachi, it was my father's funeral; and Marie Lavini was the only mourner."

"How came she here?" said Pachi, whose very brain was dazed with all that had transpired so quickly.

"Oh, my dear sir, when you hear the story from her lips; when you know that for twelve long, weary years Mademoiselle Marie Lavini and Paleppi Aggi have been wandering beggars together; when you know that this poor girl has been cold and hungry for your sake; when you know that she has dragged her weary body over the mountains of Spain, France, and Italy for twelve long years, and lived to see Paleppi Aggi, her faithful comrade, fall dead in the streets of Genoa, and be dragged like a beggar to rest, then you will know the love a woman bears you; then you will know how she has served you. Oh! her story, lieutenant, is enough to break a heart of stone," sobbed Aggi.

Lieutenant Pachi sat dazed with excitement. He wondered if he could be dreaming or if his mind had once more forsaken him.

Putting his hand upon the face of Phil, he looked into his eyes as if he were gazing into the distance.

"You are Phil Aggi, really and truly, aren't you?" said the lieutenant, strangely.

"I guess so," said Phil, "but I really should not like to swear to it to-night."

"I thought I was dreaming," said the lieutenant, as if suddenly awakened from an unconscious condition. "I must have been asleep or something," he continued, with a vague, blank expression upon his face, as he rubbed his eyes. "Oh no, my God, 'tis true, 'tis true!" cried Pachi with emotion. "It all comes back again. My mind was

dazed, Phil. My poor brain has passed so many sleepless nights that I seem to lose myself. Tell me, Phil, how came Marie Lavini in Spain?"

"She was drugged by that rascal Garcia, and locked in a stateroom upon a steamer bound for England."

"Curse his wicked heart!" cried Lieutenant Pachi. "But tell me how she came to leave the ship at the Strait."

"The drugs the wretched scoundrel gave her had but short effect, and in his absence she gained her freedom, on the very night of her departure, and rushing to the deck above, she found shelter among the great, black machinery of the ship. Still the rascal followed her, in company with an officer, and demanded her surrender as his wife. Marie had decided that she would leap into the deep, dark waters of the sea before he should ever again look upon her face."

"God bless her! God bless my darling!" said Pachi, whose eyes were riveted on the face of the speaker, eager to hear every word that dropped from his lips. "Proceed," said Pachi, almost wild with excitement.

"You remember the awful night she left Naples: how the wind howled, and the rain came down in sheets," said Aggi.

"Would to heaven I could forget it!" returned Pachi.

"Well, upon that awful night Mademoiselle Marie Lavini jumped from the hurricane-deck of an ocean steamer."

"Into the sea?" said Pachi, with a look of almost frenzy on his face.

"No," said Aggi, "fortunately she landed in a coil of rope upon the deck below, and was quickly carried by Paleppi into the steerage quarters, where she was secretly kept until the arrival of the vessel in Gibraltar. And from that hour till my poor, old father fell dead in the streets of Genoa on the night of Christmas eve, he was her faithful comrade."

As the last words fell from the lips of Phil Aggi, Lieutenant Pachi sat as pale as marble, great drops of perspiration stood out upon his face, and his hands were firmly locked together.

"So she came at last," said he—"came like the bright shining wing of an angel to bless my aching heart. Came back as pure as the incense of heaven, to rest my weary, sleepless brain and let me live again."

The carriage had arrived at the convent, and Phil and the lieutenant had entered and seated themselves in the reception-room.

"Sister," said Phil to one of the sisters of charity, "can I speak to Marie Lavini for a moment?"

"She is in the garden," said the sister.

Phil opened the outer door as Marie entered the vestibule.

"Back, are you, Phil?" said Marie, with a smile.

As the door of the reception-room was ajar, Lieutenant Pachi heard once more the voice of Marie Lavini. He had arisen just as Phil Aggi pushed open the door, and in another instant Marie Lavini was in the presence of the only man she ever loved.

## CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

EDWARD GARCIA LAVINI, whose boarding place in London was at the Royal Arch, in Elizabeth Street, had returned from lectures one cold winter's night, and seated himself before the fireplace. As he sat dreamily gazing upon the fire, a servant entered, lighted the gas, and soon departed. Shortly after her departure, the postman's whistle was heard, and the Evening Times deposited in the hallway. Edward arose and, taking the paper, descended the stairway to the dining-room below, where he found three of his table chums awaiting him. Spreading out the paper upon the table, the first thing he noticed were these words: "Scandal in high life." "Hello!" said Edward, "something to feast upon now, gentlemen: 'A scandal in high life.' Let us see," as he began reading aloud. "'At the marriage on Saturday last, at the Church of the Redemption, of Prof. Marion Wood's elder daughter, Rhea, to Mr. Erold Trollup, a recent graduate from the Academy, a sensational scene occurred, which amounted to the absolute arrest of the bridegroom in the midst of the marriage ceremony. An officer of the law, having entered the church, took young Trollup as prisoner, charged with the manufacture of spurious coin in Buena Vista, his country home, somewhere upon the lowlands of the Oneta River. The person preferring charges is an Italian by the name of Meonta Garcia-' My God!" said Edward, as he suddenly stopped reading aloud.

"What's the matter, Lavini, old fellow? You look very pale," said one of the gentlemen at the table.

"Oh, nothing," said Edward, who had discovered the name of "Paralotti" at the beginning of another line. "Nothing, gentlemen, only a sudden pain pierced my side; it is gone now, and I will proceed. 'The person preferring charges is one Prof. Meonta Garcia Paralotti, an inmate of Prof. Wood's own house. At midnight on Saturday, Meonta Garcia Paralotti was himself arrested upon suspicion of being engaged in the very same business. morning the preliminary examination of Trollup was held in the court-house, and, to the surprise of every one, the Italian Professor acknowledged his own guilt, exonerated Trollup from all blame, and was sentenced to seventeen years' hard labor in prison. Trollup was united in marriage with Miss Rhea Wood before leaving the court-house, in the midst of deafening cheers." Edward stopped reading aloud, but made no comment upon the unfortunate affair.

The servant now returned with the order he had given for his supper; and hastily partaking of only a scanty portion of the meal, he excused himself and left the room.

"Something strange in Lavini's actions to-night, gents. Did you notice how very nervous he appeared while reading?" said one.

"Not particularly," said the other; "only he seemed to be greatly interested in the affair."

Edward returned to the reception-room, and stood with his face pushed closely against the window-pane, peering out into the darkness. The name of Meonta Garcia Paralotti troubled him beyond description. "It cannot be that this unfortunate criminal is my father," said he to himself. "Oh no." He pooh-poohed the very idea of such a thing; still he did not succeed in removing the disagreeable name from his mind. After having read the current news of the day, he decided to walk over to the college and look over some anatomical specimens the demonstrator of anatomy had prepared for the class. Passing a news-room on the way down town, he saw crayoned upon a bulletin-board, in deep black letters, the name of Meonta Garcia Paralotti, as being the leader of a notorious gang of countefeiters, etc. Edward stopped and read the entire bulletin, which referred to Paralotti as being an Italian Professor, supposed to hail from Naples, Italy. This bulletin left an impression upon Edward's mind that possibly the so-called "Paralotti" might be none other than his unfortunate father under an assumed name. Proceeding to the lecture-room of the college, Edward asked his tutor in anatomy to go with him to the prison, as he thought "Mr. Paralotti" belonged to a family in Naples well known to his people.

After a few moments' conversation, Edward and his tutor were on the way to the prison.

"Lavini," said the anatomist, "there is a case of old-fashioned typhus, ship-fever, at the prison in an advanced stage of the disease; possibly we may succeed in gaining admission to look over the patient. It will be highly instructive, as the diagnostic points between it and typhoid fever, so common between latitudes 30° and 60°, are very little understood by the profession at large."

"Indeed!" replied Edward. "But typhus fever is extremely contagious, is it not?"

"Very much so," returned the tutor. "But, Lavini, we physicians never allow the contagious character of a disease to annoy us in the least."

"I suppose not," said Edward. "But is there no danger of an epidemic in the prison?"

"Yes, there is great danger," replied the anatomist, "and on that account the case presents unusual interest. Various of the prominent physicians of London have investigated the case, and there are broad differences of opinion regarding the character of the disease."

"One thing," remarked the tutor: "this case presents the remarkable temperature of 108 degrees Fahrenheit on the fifth day of incubation."

"Is it possible?" said Lavini, who had paid but little attention to what the anatomist had said, his mind being wholly concentrated upon the fact of his father's presence in London. The prison was reached at the hour of eight in the evening. Edward and the anatomist entered the warden's office, and asked permission to see the face of Meonta Garcia Paralotti.

"For what purpose?" asked the warden.

"I think he is an acquaintance of mine," said Edward, "and I desire to speak a few words of consolation to him in his misery."

"Certainly," returned the warden, who took a large bunch of keys from the safe, and all three entered the corridor. The prison cells were all situated in a square block of masonry in the centre of a large room. Passing entirely around the block of masonry was a corridor, into which opened a door from all the prison cells upon the ground-floor. The upper cells were reached by a winding stairway made fast to the masonry, at the top of which was an iron platform extending entirely around the structure. As Edward entered the corridor, the warden pointed his finger

to an upper cell and said: "In that cell you will find Paralotti."

Edward bounded up the stairway, midst the shouts and insulting remarks of the unfortunate inmates, and proceeded to the cell in question.

Paralotti had taken a blanket from his bunk and thrust it between the iron bars of his cell door, entirely obscuring a view of the cell or its inmate.

Tremblingly Edward called out, "Paralotti, can I speak with you?" Instantly the blanket was pulled from the grating and Meonta Garcia and son stood face to face.

"Well, what's wanted?" said the Italian.

"Paralotti, I saw an account of your arrest in the *Times* to-night, and the newspaper item sets forth the fact that you were supposed to have come from Naples."

"From Naples!" said Paralotti in astonishment, and with a look of anguish upon his face.

"Yes, sir," returned Edward; "and as Naples is my home, I felt deeply interested in your misfortune. I have therefore come to offer my feeble assistance in doing anything in my power to render your confinement as pleasant as possible."

"I was not aware that one of God's creatures was interested in my welfare," as he burst into tears. "I shall not be confined here long," said Paralotti.

"Indeed?" returned Edward. "I thought you were sentenced for seventeen years at hard labor."

"Yes, so I was," said the Italian with a sigh. "But death will release me long before that, my boy. The confinement here is nothing, compared with the awful weight upon my mind. I cannot close my eyes to sleep but that

hideous objects appear before me, and oh, how I suffer! My hair has turned white, and the flesh is fast leaving my poor bones," said the Italian, as he pulled up the sleeve of his shirt and displayed an arm of flabby flesh.

"Let me see," said Edward, taking the hand of Paralotti, as his eyes rested upon two letters pricked in India ink upon his arm.

"What letters are these, M G?" said Lavini, as he tried in vain to see some feature in the face of the man before him that resembled the ancient likeness of his father.

"Why do you ask?" returned the Italian, angrily, evidently feeling that he was in the presence of a young detective in search of his true name.

"Pardon me, Mr. Paralotti; I did not mean to be impudent, sir; I only asked because I did not know but that those letters interested me personally."

"How could they possibly interest you?" quickly asked the Italian.

"Because, sir, they are the initials of my father's name Meonta Garcia, of Naples, Italy. Did you know him?" asked Edward. No answer came. "Did you know him, Mr. Paralotti?" said Edward, peering into the cell. Still no answer. Edward lighted a match and held it through the grating of the cell door, and standing upon tiptoe, saw the prostrate form of Paralotti lying upon the floor. His ghastly, upturned face startled Edward as he cried out to the warden below that Paralotti had been taken suddenly ill and was lying upon the floor of the prison.

In an instant the door of the cell was unlocked, and the anatomist, taking the wrist of the prisoner, directed some brandy to be given him at once. The warden rushed down

the stairway, turned the lock in the outside door of the prison, and procured the brandy.

During the absence of the warden Paralotti had regained consciousness, and raising his trembling body from the floor, kept his deep, dark eyes constantly upon Lavini.

"I say, young man, what is your name, please?"

"My name, sir, is Edward Garcia Lavini,' and my home is in Naples, Italy."

"Is it so?" said the Italian, with a look of intense pain upon his face, as he grasped the iron bars of the casement and tremblingly stood erect. "Then, Edward Garcia Lavini, behold thy father's face."

The meeting that took place between father and son in the prison that night can be better imagined than described. The moment Edward mentioned his name, Garcia knew that Madame Garcia had married Signor Lavini. But oh, how he suffered as Edward made known the history of the Lavini family for the past twelve years. And when his son referred to the loss of Marie Lavini, and that her poor father was for a time demented, and her mother dead, Garcia broke down entirely.

Edward left the prison and decided to write his mother at once of the discovery of his father in prison. Consequently he hastened to his room and penned the following lines to his mother:

"LONDON, ENGLAND.

"MY DEAR MOTHER: My father is here in prison to serve a sentence of seventeen years at hard labor. Physicians say he cannot live long at most, and I write to ask that Signor Lavini and yourself will sail for England by first steamer. This request you will grant if you ever nope to see my face on earth again.

"EDWARD GARCIA LAVINI."

"God speed the message!" said he to himself. "The only service I shall ever render my poor unfortunate father shall be words of forgiveness from my mother's lips. Then let his weary soul break loose and wing its way, God grant, to everlasting peace."

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

At the moment Marie found herself in the presence of Lieutenant Pachi her face flushed, as she cast her eyes upon the floor. Quickly she remembered the public reports of her elopement that had been published in the papers of Naples, and well she knew the odium attached to her name.

"Marie Lavini, you have returned at last!" said the lieutenant, with emotion, as he rushed forward, and seizing her hands, kissed them passionately.

Marie coldly withdrew her hands and stepped backward towards the window.

- "Pardon me, Marie," said Pachi; "I have taken liberties that doubtless belong to others."
- "Tis not so, Lieutenant Pachi," answered Marie; "yet I do not wonder at your surmise, after the uncharitable publications reflecting so harshly upon my character at the time I left Naples. You have but to be thrown upon the charities of this world to know how friendly its criticism is of those who are penniless and forlorn. Every word that was published and every sentence that has been spoken reflecting upon my honor, Lieutenant Pachi, are false!" cried Marie, defiantly.

"Thank God!" said Pachi, as he dropped upon his knees before the weeping girl. "O Marie, believe me when I say that not for one moment have I thought else

than that you had been cunningly carried away from your relatives and friends. Woe be to him, were he alive! But he has long since gone to render up an account of his stewardship on earth."

"Is he dead?" asked Marie, excitedly.

"Yes," said the lieutenant; "and may God mete out his just reward!"

A sigh passed the lips of Marie Lavini as she heard these words. "Dead!" returned she with a strange, far-away expression upon her face. "How unfortunate!" she muttered to herself.

"A strange interest you still have in this man Garcia," said Pachi, sarcastically.

"Oh no, William; still I had hoped to see his face before he died."

"Sorry, indeed, that you are disappointed," said Pachi, with a sneer, as he arose and took his military cap from the table.

"Yes, I am more disappointed than you know, to hear of the death of Prof. Garcia."

"Why?" said the lieutenant, angrily, as he stepped backward towards the door.

"Because I have prayed that the day might come when I should stand in the presence of that wicked man, surrounded by those who love me, and at a moment when his sin-sick soul was struggling to be free. I have prayed that I might be privileged to herald to the world his dying words, that they might know from his lips the circumstances under which Marie Lavini left her native land. But you say he is dead, and nothing now remains but my simple statement to face the wicked criticisms of public

misjudgment." As Marie spoke these words, she cried bitterly.

"Let those who dare, pronounce criticism upon you, Marie Lavini," said the lieutenant, as he brought his hand down upon the table with a crash. "O Marie, during all these years I have preserved and cherished a love for you that was not to be shaken by the wicked, lying reflections of the world; patiently have I borne the terrible affliction of your departure, and hourly have I prayed for your return to Italy in safety. At an hour when those near and dear to you had allowed impressions to be made upon their minds not flattering to your dear, sweet self, I bore bravely up and resented criticisms in bitter language. By day and by night your happy, loving face has been constantly before me. O Marie, I have always loved you, and from hour to hour I have sought to purify that love and make it worthy of one so kind and good. Often during the wretched hours that have elapsed since your departure I have found my only comfort in the home of your blessed father. He knows how much I love you, my darling girl, and only yesterday I received a letter from him addressing me as his own dear son. Look into my eyes, Marie, and see if you can find the light of love that is shining forth to greet you. O Marie, will you be my wife? Believe me, I will struggle unceasingly to make your blessed life as free from care and sorrow as the little, trim-winged sparrows that sail upon seas of sunshine. My strong arm shall protect and shelter you from all the storms of life; and though you have never said you loved me, I have flattered myself that I could see it in many little attentions you have shown me. And now, Marie, I come to-"

But before Lieutenant Pachi had finished this second petition, Marie Lavini arose and, putting forth her hands, said:

"William Pachi, take your prodigal wife to your bosom, and pray God she may be worthy of so great a blessing."

That night Lieutenant Pachi and Marie Lavini were united in the holy bonds of marriage, and Phil Aggi presented the bride.

Yes; none other than poor Phil Aggi, who, in days long gone, had felt the lash of the bridegroom's whip upon his back, now presented him with his bride. And as the words were spoken that made them one, Phil Aggi felt that his full mission in life had been accomplished. He had reached the goal for which he had suffered bitterly, and upon his knees he thanked "the great Giver of all good" for the so happy termination of affairs.

Phil was not aware that in finding Marie Lavini he had merited the reward of \$10,000 from Signor Lavini, her father, and had decided never again to return to Naples. But upon making his intentions known to Lieutenant Pachi, the latter, as well as Marie, insisted upon his return with them.

A few days were spent in Genoa arranging for leave of absence, suitable wardrobes, etc., during which time Marie had heard from the lips of her husband everything pertaining to society life in Naples. When the fact of her father's marriage to Madame Garcia was made known to her, though greatly astonished, she was agreeably surprised to know that Madame Garcia had been so fortunate and happy. The fact of old Annine's being alive and still in

the family pleased her beyond description. She heard also that General Pachi and family were still alive, though very much broken down by reverses in fortune. The old General had been retired and given two years in which to make good the deficiency of 20,000 lire to the government, otherwise he was to be cashiered from the service; and as the 15th of January was the last day of the time allowance, he saw no way to liquidate his indebtedness, and had become almost demented at the prospect. The The General had told his son, and William, of course, made the facts of his father's embarrassment known to Marie. General Pachi had often thought of asking Signor Lavini for assistance, but, dreading to make known the facts of his defalcation, he had decided to accept his dismissal from the service as a just punishment for past extravagances. Still Lieutenant Pachi had decided to ask Signor Lavini for the desired amount, had not the blessed face of his beloved wife appeared in due time to prevent it. Madame Baretti had died, and Inez, her daughter, had married young Rabagliatti, and they were living in Naples, with two little boys to bless their happy home.

The last letter Lieutenant Pachi received from Signor Lavini, which was written upon Christmas Day, made known the fact that he had arranged to permanently locate at Lavini Castle again, and desired the pleasure of his company upon the occasion of reopening the old castle on New Year's Day.

This letter Lieutenant Pachi had not shown to his wife, as he was preparing a surprise for her upon her arrival in Naples.

Lieutenant Pachi, his wife, and Phil Aggi were located

at the Hotel Aline, a popular rendezvous for military officers and their families. Pachi had purchased a magnificent trousseau for his beautiful wife, and the little necklace of Egyptian beads, bearing the locket Marie had kissed so fondly, as her only friend, on the night of her captivity on board the ship, now hangs gracefully about her neck. The little cross of diamonds and rubies, having been redeemed once more sparkles upon her sun-burnt hand; her cheeks, painted by exposure to the sweet, soft winds of Italy, wear the very tint of the wild rose. Her soft, beautiful eyes are a feast to look upon. Oh, with what degree of admiration does her husband gaze upon her from day to day; with what inward satisfaction does he listen to the congratulations of his friends upon his grand selection, and how supremely happy is he every hour!

Lieutenant Pachi had succeeded in obtaining his leave of absence, and the following day, December 31st, had been selected as a suitable time of departure for Naples. Yet Marie could not think of leaving Genoa without paying one more visit to the tomb of dear old Paleppi Aggi; consequently Lieutenant Pachi arranged for the conveyance of Marie, Phil Aggi, and himself to the grave of the dear old man, where Marie placed a bouquet of forget-me-nots upon his earthy bed, and all knelt and prayed for the perpetual peace of his departed soul.

Returning to the city, all details for their departure were prepared, and on the following day they were off for Naples. The early morning air was white with frost, and as the sun arose the world looked like a crystal cavern full of sparkling lights, and as the sun came streaking up the sky the frost passed quickly out of sight.

It was the last day of the old year, and it seemed as if the bright new sun was chasing the white and hoary locks of the dear old year from view.

Marie arose that morning, and when her eyes caught sight of the frosty air she could no longer suppress the tears that flowed thick and fast. She remembered the story Paleppi had told her of the morning of her birth. If her dear mother's face could only greet her as she returned to Lavini Castle, her happiness would be complete. But no; as she reflected on all things she said to herself: "Thank God, my mother is in heaven!"

Marie had finished dressing and was about to awaken her husband, as a rap came upon the door, and instantly the voice of Phil Aggi announced the hour of the train's departure. "Besides," said Phil, "have you seen the beautiful morning, my mistress?"

"I have," answered Marie, happily; "isn't it glorious, Phil?"

Marie awakened her husband with a kiss, and soon all were in the breakfast-room, hurriedly partaking of the meal, as the hour of departure was soon at hand. Shortly past ten o'clock the railway-train rolled out of the station. Hour after hour passed pleasantly by. The city of Florence was reached as the sun was in the meridian. Here all trains remained while dinner was being served.

As Marie stepped upon the platform she saw many faces that had, in years gone by, fastened their likeness in her memory; yet she had forgotten the names that accompanied them.

At the hour of one the train was again in motion. The scenery from Florence to Rome was grand beyond description. To the right lay the calm blue waters of the Mediterranean, and to the left the high and rocky peaks of the Apennines. From time to time the tearful eyes of Marie Lavini caught sight of the Islands of Sardinia, and vividly the scenes of her wretched departure returned to her. At last the grateful shadows of nightfall closed out the scene, and the bright lights of the Roman city flickered in the distance. As the train passed slowly through the streets of the city, throngs of laborers with shining pails upon their arms were seen returning from their daily toil; in the shopwindows glistened the bright array of ornamental objects and now and then a beggar with outstretched hands stood mutely by, vainly pleading to the deaf ears of humanity for assistance. Soon the train stopped under the great Roman Arch, so famous for its massive grandeur, and the supper meal was served.

At the hour of eight that night, Lieutenant Pachi and his beautiful bride could have been seen hurriedly passing down the Via de Toledo in Naples, with Phil Aggi close at their heels. Stopping, as was the custom of Lieutenant Pachi, at the postal office of distribution, he inquired if the postal car for Vesuvius, via Lavini Castle, had departed.

- "Not yet," answered the postman; "only a few moments now before its departure."
- "Can I arrange for three sittings to Lavini Castle?" said the lieutenant.
- "I believe so," answered the postman; "but the castle is closed now."

Lieutenant Pachi paid no attention to the last remark, but secured the tickets of transportation, and soon the car was rolling along. Marie peered out through the little dingy windows of the car, and every object that met her eyes seemed as familiar as though seen but yesterday. As the car rolled up before Lavini Castle, and the postman blew his whistle, Marie's heart was in her throat. It seemed as if all her bodily powers had deserted her, and every muscle in her body trembled as the doors of the mansion were thrown open.

"This is the first stop I have made at Lavini Castle for many a day," said the postman, as he placed a parcel of mail in the hands of a servant, who was about to return, when he spied the face of Lieutenant Pachi, who had jumped to the ground and was assisting the trembling form of his darling wife in alighting.

tenant as they marched arm-in-arm up the stone steps of Lavini Castle, and seated themselves in the reception-room—the very room where Marie had looked for the first time upon the wicked face of her abductor.

"Is Signor Lavini in the castle?" asked Lieutenant Pachi.

"He is," said the servant.

"Kindly say to him that a lady and gentleman desire to see him, alone, in the reception-room."

The servant returned with the message that Signor Lavini had excused himself from the parlors and was in the library above, looking over his mail.

"Very well," said the lieutenant, "we shall see him in the library.

Lieutenant Pachi and his wife arose, leaving Phil Aggi

in the reception-room, and proceeded up the old, familiar stairway to the library. As they approached the door of the library, the sound of voices was heard. Marie placed her ear to the door, and heard her father read aloud a letter from Edward Garcia Lavini, in London, to the effect that Garcia was dying in prison, and demanding their presence in London post-haste.

"My God!" said Lavini, "what shall we do?"

"Go by all means!" rang out the voice of Marie Lavini Pachi, as she burst open the door of the library, and was in her father's arms again.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

Every day of prison life made its impression on Garcia. He refused to eat anything on the fourth day of his confinement, and barely took food enough from week to week to keep soul and body together. Edward had not allowed a day to pass without visiting his poor father, and, as far as lay in his power, had made him comfortable. Still he saw his father's rapid decline mentally and physically from day to day, and became satisfied that his stay on earth was limited indeed. Edward had called at the home of Prof. Marion Wood and procured various articles of value belonging to his father.

Garcia had caused a will to be drawn in which he bequeathed all his earthly effects to his son Edward, upon one condition, and that was that he should make England his home; a condition Edward complied with to the end of his life. Some days had passed during which the fever raged furiously in the prison hospital, and the warden had denied Edward admission to the presence of his father.

Finally Sunday came, and a beautiful, clear, cold day it was. Edward had passed several sleepless nights in constant worry lest he should never see his father again alive. Arriving at the prison, he implored the warden to grant him an audience of only a few moments with his poor father. The warden at first refused to grant the request, but after a full explanation upon Edward's part of how

wretched he was, the warden finally permitted him to enter. Edward ascended the narrow iron stairway to his father's cell. Pressing his face closely against the black iron bars of the cell door, and peering into the darkness, he said, "Father, father! it is Edward, your son." No answer was heard. "Father," said the boy, "I have come; will you not speak with me?" Turning his ear to an opening in the centre of the door, he listened cautiously, and it seemed to him that he could hear the faint whisperings of a husky voice say, "Edward, my son, have you come at last? I thought you too had deserted me." Thinking the words might be nothing more than the imaginations of his prostrated mind, he cried out again, "Father! O my father! It is your son that begs a word from your lips!" Pressing his ear once more to the opening in the prison door, he listened, and again he heard whisperings plainer even than before. Instantly he felt the hot breath of the poor man upon his cheek, and, turning his eyes in the direction of the sound, the ghastly face of his dying father was before him. There he stood, clutching the iron bars with his bony fingers, and inarticulate mutterings came from his thin blue lips. Edward kissed his bony hands, and, thrusting his arms between the bars of the prison door, clasped them around the neck of his beloved father. It was a scene calculated to move to tears the stoniest heart. The warden had now returned, and informed Edward that he must leave, as the hour had arrived when the board of sanitary inspectors were about to inspect the prison.

"God bless you, my beloved father," said Edward. "I am requested to leave you now."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh no, my son, I pray you will not leave me here alone

to die," came the pitiful whisperings of the wrectched man, as he clutched his fleshless fingers about the wrist of his son. "No, father, I shall succeed to-day in having you removed to a private ward, and God grant you may be spared to me for many years to come. But I must go, only for a little while. And now, dear father, lie peacefully down, and know that every moment shall be used to its best advantage in procuring your removal from this filthy dungeon."

"God speed you," said the feeble man, as he loosened his hold; and Edward was gone.

Quickly passing down the stairway to the outer door of the corridor, and turning one last look upon the prison door of his fathers cell, he burst into tears, and sobbed loudly as he entered the warden's office.

- "What's wrong, young man?" said one of the officers of the sanitary board, as he placed his hand upon Edward's shoulder.
- "My father is dying in that prison, and I am not even privileged to remain beside him in his dying moments," said Edward.
- "Something wrong here," said the officer. "What name does your father bear?"
  - "His name, sir, is Meonta Garcia Paralotti."
- "For what offence was he committed?" asked the officer.
- "For having been engaged in the manufacture of spurious coin," returned Edward.
- "How long has he been in the prison?" queried the officer.
  - "Past five weeks," answered the boy.
  - "And is he really dying, young man?"

"He is truly, sir; he cannot speak aloud. And I beseech and implore you to have him removed from that dungeon cell to a private ward in the prison, that I may be permitted to minister comfort in his dying hours. Will you, sir?" pleaded Edward in touching tones.

"I will, my boy, if it is a possible thing," said the officer, as he passed into the prison lobby and beckoned to the warden through the glass door of the corridor. "Warden," said the officer, "have you a room in the prison where the body of Meonta Garcia Paralotti can be taken? He is dying in his cell, and his son begs the privilege of remaining beside his father to the last."

"Yes," answered the warden, "there is a room at the extreme end of the jurors' loft above; but I have no authorty to permit of his being taken from the cell."

"Who is empowered to grant such permission?" said the officer.

"Any justice of the Queen's Bench, I believe," returned the warden,

"If so, you may remove the prisoner to the room above at once," answered the officer, "and I shall protect you from all responsibiltiy in the matter,"

"Very well," answered the warden.

Consequently Meonta Garcia Paralotti was removed to a private room above, where Edward nursed his beloved father through the dreary hours of that Sunday night. As the gray light of morning stole through the lattice, Edward closed his eyes for a moment and dropped asleep, but was soon awakened by the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

"Right this way Madame," said the voice of the warden. Edward jumped to his feet, and observed the look of death upon his father's face. Dropping upon his knees beside the bed, he clasped the half-cold hands of his dying father, and was about pressing it to his lips, as the door opened, and there stood Madame Garcia Lavini, with Marie by her side.

"O God! my mother!" cried Edward, as he threw his arms about her neck. Garcia opened his great glaring eyes and gazed strangely about him. "He is dying, mother, dying. Oh, forgive him, in God's name! He would ask you, but he cannot speak."

As the face of Marie Lavini appeared to the dying man, with a superhuman effort he raised his shoulders from the pillow, and swaying his bony hands backward and forward before his face, as if to brush away the misty vale of approaching death, he gasped, "My wife— Marie Lavini—forgive me, oh, forgive me!" and he was dead.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Ten years later could have been seen a dingy, gilded sign hanging from the front casement of an apothecary shop in St. John Street, London, upon which were the words "Edward Garcia Lavini, M.D." Entering a narrow stairway and peering through a greasy, smoky, window, could have been seen the confirmed "Old Bachelor Doctor" always dwelling upon what possible relationship there was existing between himself and Marie Lavini Pachi's two beautiful children.

Glasis Wood is now in partnership with Lawyer Coyne, and both are deeply interested in a very small client with but one tooth in his upper jaw.

Erold Trollup and family have left England and are

comfortably and prosperously located in the south of France; while Lieutenant Pachi and his beautiful bride are living in Lavini Castle, surrounded by faces extremely young, and extremely old, and all are extremely happy.

THE END.

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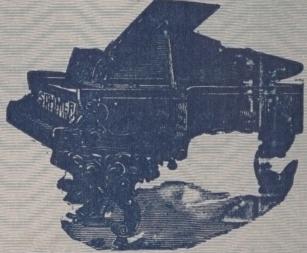
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